







TRADITIONS ABOUT ALDERSHOT:

THE CHARCOAL-BURNER; A TRADITION OF CÆSAR'S HILL.
"TUMBLE-DOWN DICK;" A TRADITION OF FARNBOROUGH.
THE MILLER OF COVE; A TRADITION OF COVE COMMON.
THE "CLOCK-HOUSE" MYSTERY; A TRADITION OF OLD ALDERSHOT.
"THE LADYE-HOUSE;" A TRADITION OF UPPER HALE.
"GENTLEMAN JOHN;" A TRADITION OF MODERN ALDERSHOT.
LILY LADE; A TRADITION OF MOTHER LUDLAM'S CAVE.

POEMS:

THE LAY OF THE LOST ENSIGN.
THE "CARTE-DE-VISITE."
THE BELL OF SEVASTOPOL.
THOUGHTS SUGGESTED BY THE VISIT OF A RUSSIAN POTENTATE
TO ALDERSHOT CAMP.
LINES ON THE DEATH OF JANE CÆSAR.
MONODY ON THE DEATH OF CATHERINE ANN WHITE.
THE LADIES.
THE MISER—A SATIRE.

BY

CHARLES STANLEY HERVÉ.

(*de la Mœnrière*).

Ficta voluptatis causa, summa veris.
HORACE, Art. Poet, 338.

Nulla venenato Littera mista joco est.
FRAG. VET. POET.

LIBRARY
OF THE
SUP. COUNCIL,
SO. JURISDICTION.

FARNHAM & ALDERSHOT:

ARTHUR E. LUCY, SURREY AND HANTS NEWS OFFICE.

PR4786
.H42T7

Library of Supreme Council A.A.S.S.
Aug 10, 1940

20724

307

47

TO

HIS TWO GOOD AND VALUED FRIENDS,

JOHN PICKERSGILL, Esq.

(Of Sheffield),

AND

J. E. BOSANQUET, Esq.

(Of Cork),

THIS LITTLE VOLUME IS AFFECTIONATELY INSCRIBED BY

The Author.

CONTENTS.

TRADITIONS.

	Page
THE CHARCOAL BURNER: A LEGEND OF CÆSAR'S HILL .	1
"TUMBLE-DOWN DICK"	27
THE MILLER OF COVE	50
THE "CLOCK-HOUSE" MYSTERY	79
ST HILDA—A LEGEND OF "THE LADYE-HOUSE" .	108
"GENTLEMAN JOHN": A MYSTERY OF THE CAMP .	128
LILY LADE: A LEGEND OF MOTHER LUDLAM'S CAVE .	150

POEMS.

THE LAY OF THE LOST ENSIGN	197
THE "CARTE-DE-VISITE:" A ROMANCE OF ALDERSHOT .	202
THE BELL OF SEVASTOPOL	207
THOUGHTS SUGGESTED BY THE VISIT OF A RUSSIAN POTENTATE TO ALDERSHOT CAMP	214
LINES ON THE DEATH OF JANE CÆSAR	217
MONODY ON THE DEATH OF CATHERINE ANN WHITE .	219
THE LADIES	221
THE MISER—A SATIRE	222

P R E F A C E.

A CERTAIN gentleman of literary tastes and good standing in society, once took on him to write, and, what is more, to publish "The Traditions of L——shire." He was a gentleman whose unassuming talent and amiable disposition had rendered him so great a favourite with all classes, that if his person had been cut into one thousand portions, he could not have accepted one tithe of the invitations which fell to his lot.

This was *before* the publication of his "Traditions," and it so happened that whilst his book was being published he, himself, was necessitated to leave home for two or three weeks. On his return, instead of finding his card-basket, and table, heaped with polite pasteboard and kind invitations, he found nothing but letters of abuse, and three challenges to mortal combat!

The reason of all this was, that in raking up information for his work, and in making use of that information without any disguise, he had "shown up" the flaws and blotches which presented themselves on so many family shields, that indignation, rather than admiration, was the result.

With this example before me, I determined, whilst inditing the following "traditions," or "legends," that in all matters touching the names and reputations of individuals whose descendants may yet exist in the locality connected with their deeds, I would not only assume fictitious names, but also amalgamate facts and fictions so ingeniously that no one particular event could be fixed on any one particular person. Again, in several instances where two or three traditions clung to the same spot, or where conflicting rumours served to throw historical doubt upon any one incident, I would take the liberty of choosing for myself the particular one best suited for recital, giving especial heed, in all cases, to publish such curious incidents as are not generally known, rather than to re-publish such current stories as were in common vogue.

Thus it will be seen that my story of "Tumble-down-

Dick" is not the popular tradition; that my stories of "Lily Lade," and "The Clock-house Mystery" are not elsewhere recorded, although founded on fact, and that my version of "The Miller of Cove" may not exactly tally with that which Tom Noakes and John Styles, may recount to travellers who stop to tipple in a roadside inn. It must suffice to be told that the following "traditions," or "legends," are not given forth as "histories," but merely as vehicles of amusement, founded upon certain current reports, and dove-tailed together so as to appear of homogeneous workmanship.

With regard to the few brief poems which are appended to this little work, two or three only have any bearing upon Aldershot or its neighbourhood, but as they have been written in, and are dated from, this particular spot, it has been thought as well to publish them in conjunction with the other portion of this volume, as a sort of make-weight, or public offering, for which assumption, and for all deficiencies, I beg to crave the leniency of all indulgent readers.

CHARLES S. HERVÉ.

(*de la Morinière*)

Flagstaff Villa, Bank Street Road, Aldershot.

March 16th, 1865.



TRADITIONS ABOUT ALDERSHOT.

THE CHARCOAL BURNER: A LEGEND OF CÆSAR'S HILL.

“There be dreams of the future and of the past, there be dreams which are prophecies, and dreams which are retrospect; the first are begat of quick brain, the second of a slow liver.”—BURTON’S “Anatomy of Melancholy.”

ABOUT two miles north by west of the ancient and romantic borough of Farnham, in Surrey, or rather more than half way between that place and the now famous camp of Aldershot, there is a bold rugged acclivity, to which tradition has awarded the name of “Cæsar’s-hill,” not that it is particularly much of a hill, nor that it is by any means certain the immortal Dictator of all conquering Rome ever placed his foot upon it, for although indications exist of its having been, at one time, the site of military operations, yet antiquarian research points to a much later date for the period of such occupation—namely, to the eventful time when England’s “model” king—Alfred the Great—went forth on his victorious march towards Reading, halting by the way at several points, amongst others at an

elevated spot "anigh to Fearnham," previously to his final expedition against the Danes, whom he defeated in no less than seven pitched battles, the last of which is supposed to be commemorated by the famous White Horse, an effigy, cut out from the chalky side of a hill not far from Reading.

Whether or not properly entitled, Cæsar's-hill continues to be so called, and will doubtless so remain until tradition be no more.

At the period of this tale, which is to say about the middle of the reign of our second Henry, Cæsar's-hill formed part of a territory granted some forty or fifty years before by Henry I., to twelve monks of the Cistercian order, who, having located themselves at the village of Waverley, formed the nucleus of a magnificent establishment, celebrated all over Christendom for the piety of its members, and the extent of its possessions.

At this particular time Farnham was a place of much greater importance than at present, and had recently been the scene of a sanguinary battle, wherein a large body of Flemish insurgents, under the Earl of Leicester, were defeated by Richard de Lucy, who, as guardian of the realm, during the temporary absence of Henry in Northumberland, had command over Bohun, Gloucester, and Cornwall, all loyal men and powerful Barons, whose assistance enabled him to make a clear riddance of the enemy, 10,000 of whom were said to have perished, their leader being himself taken prisoner.

The disturbed state of the country at this period

necessitated in a great measure that all able bodied men, between the ages of twenty and thirty-five, should embrace military service, indeed the state of vassalage which that time imposed left little to the option of anyone, the sole tillers of the land being either old men or young lads, excepting one particular class, namely, a very few who held tenure under ecclesiastical rule; hence, to serve the monks, or to hold land of them, was very desirable to such as inclined more towards peaceful occupation than towards the harsh perils of war, and as those who so held tenure were but rarely able to pay for their privilege in hard coin, it was a very general custom to repay in either produce or in labour.

Amongst the very few who held service under the monks, at Waverley Abbey, was a poor "wittal," named Michael Smudge, whose occupation as a charcoal burner led him to pass a great portion of his time in the valley at the base of Cæsar's hill, which was not then, as now, a black and barren region, but was covered with a species of tall brush-wood, interspersed with a few stunted oaks, and hazel in abundance, the which being of too trifling a value for timber purposes, were permitted to be cut and even rooted up for the purpose of making charcoal.

Michael Smudge, generally looked upon by his companions at charcoal burning as a "wittal," or creature of little wit, was not quite what he was generally estimated to be; that is to say, he was by no means destitute of sense, but possessed a singular

combination of acuteness in some matters, with obtuseness in others. He was absent-minded in the extreme, given to day-dreams, castle-building (in the air) and many other peculiarities which seemed to make him the butt of his fellow labourers, who would play all manner of tricks upon him, such as stealing his dinner, and persuading him he had eaten it, or perhaps pouring water on his cone of charcoal, and even at times exchanging his sack of produce for one containing green twigs only, which the poor fellow would carry on his back for many a weary mile, his brains being pre-occupied with some day dream or other to the great detriment of his worldly prosperity. For the rest, Michael was harmless and inoffensive, pursuing his way through life with a plodding industry worthy of a better cause and better companionship.

If, however, poor Michael was lowly rated by his companions in toil, there was one other in the world at least who estimated the humble charcoal burner in a degree far above his actual station, and who rightly perceived in his pre-occupation of mind the germ of an inquiring disposition, such as might be turned to account. This one person was no other than Father Nicholas, a monk of Waverley Abbey, the leech or physician to his fraternity, a man of remarkable knowledge for the day wherein he lived, and also one of no small erudition.

Who Father Nicholas was, or how his life had been

spent before he became a monk, was a profound mystery to all but himself. In person he was thin, wiry, tall, and ascetic of countenance; that he had travelled was an acknowledged fact, but beyond this he admitted nothing, permitting rumour, with her hundred tongues, to do her best or worst with his reputation, and encouraging instead of refuting the most absurd libels.

As a matter of course Father Nicholas was reported to have studied the occult sciences, and it was due alone to his profession of the priesthood that he was not shunned, by one and all, as a dealer in the black art—let this be as it may, he was, as before stated, leech of his fraternity, and as such enjoyed the privilege of a laboratory within the walls of Waverley Abbey, together with certain immunities of a kind to lessen the restraint which had else fettered his actions.

How this learned monk came to bestow notice on a humble charcoal burner happened in this fashion. He had, one fine summer's morning, according to frequent custom, been collecting a few herbs and simples, of which his laboratory stood in need. Amongst others, digitalis, or fox-glove, was indispensable, and none could he find. Lighting accidentally upon Michael Smudge, and naming to him his object, the monk was greatly pleased with the alacrity with which the poor lad supplied his want, as also by the readiness of his perception in knowing one plant from another.

This accidental occurrence led to further intimacy,

till at last the charcoal burner became his purveyor general of simples, and frequently passed whole evenings with his patron whilst concocting medicines in his laboratory.

In course of time Father Nicholas grounded his pupil both in reading and writing, an accomplishment of singular rarity in those days; nor did his kindness end even here, for it was the monk's habit occasionally to recite and greatly amplify certain passages of historic record, especially such as pertained to the occupation of England by the Romans. He greatly delighted to tell how, in days long passed, the legions of Imperial Cæsar found our ancestors a race of savages, and how he taught them the arts of civilization—how to clothe themselves, to make, as well as to use arms to build castles, erect bridges, construct aqueducts, and lay down roads. He expatiated also on their prowess, their martial bearing, their intellectual qualities; not omitting to mention the fashion of their dress, their mode of attack and defence, and a vast number of other matters deeply interesting to a willing listener. It must also be admitted that, like nearly all retailers of historical romance, the monk, relying on the utter ignorance of his audience, by no means fettered himself with the chains of probable truth, but greatly loved to mystify his hearer by exaggerated descriptions, and even sometimes utter impossibilities. As an instance of this he described the warriors of Rome as men of gigantic

structure, armed to the very teeth, driving about in golden chariots, drawn by winged horses, and the person of great Cæsar himself as no less than ten feet high, his glance being lightning, and his voice thunder.

Amongst other marvels of description, the monk especially delighted Michael by telling him that the very hill upon which he had been accustomed to follow his occupation as charcoal burner had once been an encampment, favoured by the presence of Julius Cæsar himself. This, to the ears of Michael, was indeed enchantment, and served as food for many an hour that had else passed wearily enough.

This kind of intercourse, greatly as it was estimated both by tutor and pupil, was still not relished by one individual at Waverley—that one was no other than Paul, the lodge porter, a lean, ferret-eyed, inquisitive personage, who greatly preferred his own ease and comfort to the convenience of all other persons whatsoever. Now Paul, it must be observed, did not like to be disturbed after vespers, his gate being closed at the hour of curfew, and his eyes loving to close at the same time, but owing to the long converse which frequently ensued between Father Nicholas and Michael Smudge, he was frequently called upon to open his gate for the purpose of letting out the latter named. This was his grievance, and one for which he determined to be avenged when fitting time should come.

At the expiration of some twelve months from the

date of first meeting with his patron, Michael became so dissatisfied with his humble occupation of charcoal burning, that it need not be any matter for surprise if he longed to become a soldier, to follow in the train of some modern conqueror, to wield the pike, to don the morion, and himself become a man of mark and mettle, an ambition which might seem indeed by no means difficult of attainment, inasmuch as every petty baron was a warrior chief, and every slave of the soil bound to follow in his wake. But then Michael was a servant of the Church, which just then was not quite so militant as it became a few years later, and as the Church's servant was bound to do her bidding, it was therefore with a very heavy heart that he still found himself compelled to follow his old occupation; but there was no help for it.

With lagging step and heavy heart did Michael, on the morning following one of Father Nicholas's most glowing descriptions, find his way to the valley below Cæsar's Hill, for the purpose of preparing a larger quantity than usual of charcoal for the use of the abbey. Slowly and toilfully did he chop his wood, peel it, build it up in the shape of a cone, heap up around it a covering of clay, and lastly, apply a light to the mass, after which he determined on taking a comfortable nap, little doubting he should awake time enough to see his task properly completed; but herein he was wrong, as the sequel will show, for sleepers are apt

to dream, and dreamers to sleep on. This was Michael's case, for no sooner did his bodily eyes close, than his mental optics opened to a scene so strange, so vision-like, that if it were not an absolute prophecy, must certainly be looked on as somewhat more than a mere dream or disease of the imagination.

This, then, was Michael's dream, vision, or prophetic wandering of mind. Looking up from his place of rest towards the summit of Cæsar's Hill, what was his astonishment to behold, in the place of a few straggling bushes, a very forest of pikes, borne apparently by as many warriors armed and equipped after the fashion described to him so often by his priestly tutor. Without doubt these stalwart forms, their heads encased in glittering helmets, their loins girded, their feet sandalled, their left arms bearing ponderous shields, whilst their right hands grasped either mighty falchions or still more mighty pikes, their eagle glance, their proud defiant look, all, all bespoke the invincible legions of imperial Rome, just as he had pictured them from his tutor's words. Yes, there were surely the eagle-crowned standards of which he had heard. There, too, the war chariots, shining with gold ; there also were the engines of destruction that either battered down walls, or cast forth stones ; there also were the horsemen whose prodigious strength and weight were said to have struck such terror into the Gauls that they fled like a whirlwind before them. There, too, in imperial state, towering

above all his compeers in command, was all-conquering Cæsar, his bald but noble brow crowned with the laurel wreath his deeds had so nobly earned, his eye wearing lightning in its glance, and his lips giving utterance to the far-famed words, "veni, vidi, vici."

The vision, or the reality (for it seemed both) came upon his senses almost palpably, picturing an army of ten thousand warriors, accompanied by all the engines of war, comprising horse and foot, led on by centurions, and commanded by great Cæsar himself; but why and wherefore? Did they arise from the dead to do deeds of naught? Or was their errand one of mortal combat? Where could arise the foe, in these degenerate days, to meet such men in mortal conflict? Who, amongst the pigmy race of present time, should dare withstand imperial Cæsar's glance? Surely none! but if so, why their presence? Hardly had Michael asked himself this question when his ear caught the sound of distant music, borne fitfully on the breeze in gushes of a harmony so beautiful that his senses revelled in the delight; anon the strain was hushed, anon it came again, soft, sweet, yet thrilling. Turning his eye towards the quarter whence it came there appeared in the far distance, as though approaching from the obscure village of Aldershot, a motley array of mannikin forms, no bigger than himself, clad in every conceivable colour of habit, though partaking mostly of red. For a time the cloud of dust encircling them prevented any distinct view; when, however, the motley crew advanced nearer, Mi-

chael was enabled to make out that their fantastic habits consisted, for the most part, of close fitting jerkins, the colour of blood, spotted round the neck and wrists with yellow, green, or blue, their loins girdled tight, their shoulders heavily laden with merchandise, and their heads crowned with frightful cylindrical objects that looked like small church steeples cut short in the building; but strange as seemed this fashion of dress, it was stranger still that no defensive armour of any kind formed part of their equipment, it being evident at a glance that one single stroke of a Roman falchion would cut down any half dozen mannikins at a blow, there being not so much as a shield to interpose, whilst their only offensive weapon, perceptible, consisted of a sort of polished tube, grafted on the stock of a crossbow, and fitted at the end with a prong or skewer, the utility of which seemed doubtful, unless with a view to the toasting of cheese; if, however, the more numerous body were thus lightly armed, there was no lack of formidable looking weapons born by a smaller party of mannikins, such as seemingly accompanied each 700 or 800 of the former kind—this smaller party being clothed in garments white as the driven snow—but armed with machines of a truly formidable kind, huge, bell-like, and brazen mouthed, some coiled in folds like serpents, others possessing extraordinary powers of elongation, but all formed evidently with deadly intent, and capable doubtless of great execution.

Besides these mere foot soldiers of a so truly ridiculous

kind, there presently advanced a cavalcade of horsemen, not quite so harmless looking, but still very inefficiently armed to encounter the glorious cavalry of Rome, for in spite of a certain daring look on each countenance, and an attempt at beardliness, it became evident, on inspection, that these, like the former mentioned, were without any adequate means of resisting an attack boldly made, as, with the exception of a few who were indeed armed with tolerable pikes, having little red and white streamers attached, their only weapon seemed to be a short sword, and a couple of still shorter flask-like implements worn at the saddle bow. Beyond these squadrons of horsemen, again, came others whose occupation was to superintend the conveyance of an unaccountably strange looking number of engines upon four wheels, the purpose and utility of which it was utterly impossible for anyone to guess; they were not of a kind called a catapult, although perhaps designed for a like purpose, neither were they of the nature of chariots like to those of the Romans, but still with an ugly look about them betokening mischief. Following upon all these came several yet more extraordinary looking engines, upraised, like their predecessors, on four strong wheels, but looking more like huge cauldrons than anything else, and possibly intended as such, the whole being guarded and accompanied by diminutive warriors, clothed a trifle more like men than those who preceded them, having their bodies encased in dark blue with red bandages

adown each leg, and the wallets for their victuals, of a like red colour, attached for convenience' sake to the top of their head dress.

As this extraordinary looking body of mannikins approached the legions of imperial Rome, the heart of Michael Smudge, whilst yet inspired by the high and ennobling emotions so natural to one who looked now, for the first time, upon military display, could not help feelings of the deepest compassion for the doomed host now hastening on to its destination. That a conflict was imminent there could be no doubt, and that Rome would triumph was equally evident, but so unequal appeared the chances, and so inevitable the result, he could not but mourn the loss of so much gallant daring, or help to deplore the overthrow of so much useless courage.

Nearer and more near drew the opposing forces; those of imperial Rome being drawn up in close phalanx, after the model of ancient Greece, exposing to their foe an impenetrable mass truly noble to look upon, and utterly impregnable according to the usages of past experience, whilst their advancing enemies, instead of concentrating their power, seemed rather to spread out and gather in groups or columns, forming themselves in lines and squares with a rapidity marvellous to look upon. Michael could not but feel wonder at the total absence of all apparent command on the part of these mannikin forces, as with the exception of two or three

horses galloping about at random, there seemed to be no presiding spirit at work, unless such might have been supposed to exist in the person of a little withered old man whose upper clothing was a shabby cloak surmounted by a triangular head covering, ornamented with the tail of a cock.

Impatience seized upon the legions of Rome; they shouted to be led on, their brawny arms with falchions upraised, clashed on their metal shields with a sound calculated to spread dismay, yet all was silenced in the ranks of the foe, save that there now burst one simultaneous clang of music, entrancing to the ear, and beautiful in the extreme. But what availed such effeminate sounds to drown the war cry of such men as owned Imperial Cæsar as their head? Again and again Heaven's vault re-echoed to the hoarse throats of the Roman host, who, at the command of their mighty leader, now advanced to meet the foe.

It was a moment of intense excitement for Michael Smudge, who looked wonderingly and with awe upon the coming conflict. Onward they dashed, as with one impulse, those proud defiant warriors, their arms raised on high, and their heavy foot-fall shaking the earth with a vibration like to a thunder peal. Onward, still onward, like the surging wave of ocean tide, the mannikin foe making no response except by upraising to their shoulders the tube-like instruments, it almost seemed, as if in derision.

The legions of Rome had advanced to perhaps some fifty paces distant from their foe, when a marvel occurred of so startling a kind as might well arrest their career. From the ranks of the mannikins, or rather from tubes of their foremost ranks only, there came a sudden flash, a loud prolonged roar, and a vast cloud of thick white smoke. Immediately it became evident that some strange event had occurred within the Roman battalions, two or three hundred stalwart men having met with terrible wounds, and many lying in the agonies of death, without a single sword-thrust having been given or received. Amazed, yet still defiant, their momentary halt gave place to an intense excitement, as onward they again rushed impetuously as before, to be again met with the same upraising of tubes, the same flash and volley, the same thunderous peal, and the same death messengers that before astounded them. Madened with hope of revenge, reckless of all discipline, onward yet again they pressed, with a determination to crush their foes by a hand to hand engagement, which could not fail to be successful as of yore. But here again the legions of Rome were at fault, for their advance was met by an impenetrable wall of iron spikes, tier upon tier, at the same moment as the levelled tubes vomited forth smoke and fire, carrying with it death and confusion both horrible and strange to relate. Nor did the marvel here end; for suddenly, and as it appeared without cause, the ranks of their opposing

foe divided, forming into two walls, whilst through the opened space there issued huge tongues of fire, accompanied by a roaring sound, to which thunder concentrated in a thousand peals might afford a poor comparison, while dense clouds of white sulphurous smoke enveloped all things; but at the expiration of a few seconds a wind arose, clearing off the thick smoke, discovering those four-wheeled engines of ugly aspect before named, and from whose polished interiors there was little doubt had proceeded those awful sounds which yet rung in the ears of all.

Michael, not without trepidation, turned his glance towards the Roman host, but what a sight presented itself; heads torn from bodies, limbs mangled and bleeding, some thousand shattered corpses strewing the ensanguined ground, and the whole remaining mass of combatants looking aghast at each other, seeking in vain for a solution of the mysterious death which stalked among them.

Brief time was, however, left for either wonder or reply, for like a torrent which had burst its bounds, there came amidst them a rush of mannikin cavalry, as well as a charge of foot, and before a single one of all that gallant host, which so late looked proudly on its foes, had time to recover from its dismay, there fell upon all alike such unexpected and mysterious cuts and thrusts, not to say winged messengers of destruction, that neither shield nor morion was of avail, and death

came ingloriously, as if Mars and Jove were in league together to humble the pride of their once triumphant children, and to teach them humility for all time to come.

In a word, the legions of Rome were as a thing that had departed; they existed no longer; they were all levelled with the dust; not one, no not one remaining of all that gallant host, to tell how their despised but now triumphant enemies had called forth lightning from the skies to do the bidding of a wrathful Jove upon the sons of Rome, now for the first time humbled even to death.

Enough. Michael had seen all this. Superstition, wonder, admiration, each had by turn possessed him; but fear, never! He seemed to feel that all which he beheld was but a shadow; nay more, he was convinced of it, for his own body, led on by an irresistible impulse, passed through the entire mannikin ranks without meeting the least resistance from their impalpable shape, his insatiable curiosity inducing him to examine all things within his reach just as if they had been realities, which for the matter of investigation they did indeed appear to be, until absolutely touched by his own living hand.

Unopposed, therefore, did he seek the huge engines upon four wheels to ascertain the secret of their power; but he could make nothing out clearly, beyond the fact that some strange characters appeared to be graven on them, which a little patient investigation helped to resolve into the words "Whitworth" and "Armstrong;" a

“spell” or “charm” doubtless; for unless by the aid of Satan, how was it possible for such troops as the Romans to have been subdued?

Michael’s next point of investigation was towards those very remarkable engines of brass, with the bell mouths and the many snake like coils, the working of which lay in the hands of the mannikins in white. Here again was he foiled, inasmuch as their formidable power seemed to evaporate in mere sound, terrible enough in the instance of one huge monster, but gentle, soft, and most musical in others. Determined on knowing something at least, he bent his prying eyes again upon their form and again discovered a graven “charm” in the words, with difficulty rendered, “H. Distin, Maker, London,” another device of the devil, beyond all contradiction.

Once more, with a view to acquire knowledge, did the undaunted Michael set forth upon his investigations, chance leading him to the side of a mannikin in red, who took from a sort of pouch attached to his garment something white, oblong, and cylindrical, biting off the end with his teeth, and plunging the remainder into the tube-like instrument before described. Quickly as thought, Michael picked up from the ground the remaining portion, which contained a black powder singularly like his old friend charcoal, only of a somewhat heavier grain. Determined to ascertain, he placed it to his lips; the taste was acrid, like salt; to his nostrils,

paugh! it stunk like brimstone! yet for all this it did seem to the eye like charcoal. He would secure it, and accordingly he did so; binding it up in one corner of his tattered garment safely, as he would have bound up a golden coin, had he ever possessed one.

Well pleased with his acquisition, Michael determined on still further seeking to unriddle the knowledge of his mannikin surroundings, when, let his astonishment be judged at finding his vision at an end! the Roman hosts all vanished! the conquerors nowhere! Cæsar's Hill in exactly its usual state! and himself cold, stiff, and more than half immersed in the water of a muddy ditch; his cone of charcoal burnt to a cinder, and lying at a considerable distance from the spot to which he himself had rolled in his sleep.

Rubbing his eyes, and pinching his arm to make sure of being awake, Michael, philosophically enough, turned his steps towards home, sadly pondering on the instability of mortal hopes, and the emptiness of both his own pouch and stomach. For awhile he trudged on doggedly, but happening to place his hand on the lower part of his garment it encountered a knot! Yes, there it was, certainly a knot, the knot that his own fingers had tied. Could it then be that his dream was not all a dream? With trembling digits he undid the knot, but lo! again did disappointment befall, a small roundish pebble stone being all that met his view, and nothing resembling the black powder he had so carefully placed.

His dream ended as it began, in nothing. Nothing comes of nothing, so be it.

By the time Michael had reached Waverley Abbey, whither his steps had tended of their own accord, the hour of curfew had long passed, and as he well knew the sour visaged Paul would not admit him to the cell of Father Nicholas, it was perforce obligatory on him to seek repose as best he might until the hour of matins ; he therefore chose a tree, and climbing into its branches continued to pass the night after a fashion, but by no means cosily.

With the earliest dawn he sought Father Nicholas, and repeating his dream, was not a little nettled to find the holy man far less interested in its recital than his own vanity had led him to expect ; nor was it until Michael had arrived at the point wherein he described that which he supposed to be powdered charcoal that the monk showed any degree of attention, but at the point in question he became exceedingly interested, as the following dialogue will show :—

Father Nicholas.—Powdered charcoal didst thou say ?

Michael Smudge.—Aye, reverend Father, to the eye at least.

F. N.—Like salt to the mouth, art sure ?

M. S.—Like salt, only a thought more bitter.

F. N.—And like sulphur to the sense of smell ?

M. S.—No more, nor less, an it please your reverence.

F. N.—Strange, most strange, *I too have dreamed of something like to this!*

Here the monk sat down musingly for a good long hour or more, leaving Michael to shift his position from one leg to the other, not daring to take the liberty of seating himself until commanded so to do by his spiritual pastor and master. At length Father Nicholas awoke from his fit of musing, and, before dismissing his humble friend, enjoined absolute secrecy touching the matter of his dreams, promising to allow of his assistance in the evening during an experiment of the utmost consequence.

Punctual as a dial to the sun did Michael show himself at the hour of vespers, and forthwith began a short series of experiments, which it is almost needless to tell resulted in the discovery of Gunpowder. For several evenings were the twain engaged in concocting every variety of combination into which charcoal, sulphur, and salt could be made; and it was not until the monk had exhausted his stock of ordinary salt that he bethought him of some rock-salt or salt-petre, which had long been in his possession, that the exact requirements were effected. After this, all difficulties ceased, and the bold ecclesiastic, together with his humble coadjutor, found themselves masters of a secret destined to change the fortunes of an entire world.

Little now remains to tell except the sequel of this true legend, but as that little involves reasons why the

important secret just discovered was not at once made known, we proceed as follows :—

Father Nicholas being desirous of proving the nature of his discovery on a scale somewhat more forcible than the small dimensions of his laboratory would permit, also with a degree of secrecy which was impossible during the hours of daylight, had concocted, by the aid of Michael, a considerable quantity of the mysterious compound, which the two had agreed to dispose in such manner and in such place, as should afford no such clue to the brotherhood as might compromise them in superstitious eyes. It was their intention to place a heap of the compound, consisting of some quarter of a peck, within the grounds of the Abbey, and at midnight to insure its explosion by means of a slow match.

This notable plan was however frustrated through the curiosity of Paul the troublesome porter, whose vindictive feelings towards poor Michael Smudge led him to surmise that he could hit upon an expedient for ruining the lad by means of watching him secretly ; with this view Paul had discovered that for several nights past, a light had continued burning, contrary to law, in the laboratory of Father Nicholas, and that Michael Smudge had not retired to his humble pallet, without the walls, until night daybreak.

Determined at last to solve the mystery of what was doing within the laboratory of Father Nicholas, which, by-the-by, was the uppermost chamber of the building,

and accessible only by means of a narrow winding staircase built of stone—he stealthily mounted to its door, and with the cunning of an eaves-dropper applied, first, his eye to a crevice, and secondly his ear, by means of which he made out that a conspiracy was afloat to astonish the holy brotherhood in some extraordinary way or other that very night.

Full of the importance of his mission, Paul descended, as stealthily as he had before ascended—called up from his snug repose the Father abbot, who forthwith commanded the attendance of his twelve associates, and forming themselves into procession began to ascend the staircase leading above, to the loud chanting of “aves” and “paternosters,” thereby alarming Father Nicholas and his pupil to such a degree, that in their anxiety to prevent a premature disclosure of their plan, the firkin containing the combustible compound was hurriedly removed, and the cresset lamp, by which their apartment was lighted, swung so violently to and fro through some accidental contact, that a spark chancing to drop, caused an instantaneous explosion of the whole mass, blowing off the roof of the building, and as a matter of course entailing destruction upon all within the reach of its force.

After the first minute of terror and consternation, and by the light of a few burning fragments, it was discovered that with the exception of being blown in a body down the staircase, neither abbot, monk, nor porter was

seriously hurt, although a few pieces of falling masonry had caused contusions, and the terrors of superstition had produced their effect on the dismayed brotherhood. That the roof of their dwelling was torn off by some frightful agency, all knew, and that Father Nicholas and his companion had mysteriously disappeared, was also evident ; but until the light of the morrow's dawn came, the exact state of affairs could not be guessed at, further than that his Satanic majesty was, by one and all, voted as the prime cause and mover ; Father Nicholas himself being but a subordinate agent.

With the light of day came a wondering mass of neighbours, serving men, retainers of Farnham castle, and others whom curiosity brought together, all of whom seemed to concur in believing that the devil had carried off Father Nicholas ; but it was soon found that if such were the case, it must have been his soul only which had been taken, for his body, sadly mutilated, was found in a dry ditch, thirty or forty paces distant from the Abbey wall, stone dead and cold, whilst that of Michael Smudge was also discovered upon a large heap of brushwood, not quite dead, but with his left ankle bone so frightfully dislocated that death appeared certain from that cause, together with several contusions of an almost equally serious nature.

As for the building, with the exception of its roof being blown off, little other injury had taken place, owing to the solidity of its construction ; the slight proportion

of timber in it having prevented fire from communicating itself to other parts.

The body of Father Nicholas was interred in a stone coffin bearing no name,* and without the usual rites of sepulture, in deference to popular opinion; and Michael Smudge would doubtless have been put to a cruel death from the same cause, but that there existed so intense a desire to know how such a catastrophe had been occasioned, that it was deemed expedient to restore the sick lad, if possible, to health, in order that their curiosity might be rewarded.

In the course of a short time the assistance of such surgical aid as the times afforded was brought in. Poor Michael's leg was amputated, clumsily enough, but yet sufficiently well to preserve life. His shattered senses were brought back, though not until several months had passed over, and the abbot with his brethren were on the eve of reaping their reward, when lo! one morning just after sunrise, it was discovered that their ward had departed.

Lame as he was, sick as he yet continued, Michael Smudge had departed, without leaving behind him one single trace by which his destination could be followed up.

* Since this tradition was penned, it has come to the author's knowledge that a stone coffin was lately discovered, buried several feet beneath the existing ruins of Waverley Abbey. May this not have been the identical one in which "Father Nicholas" was interred?

For years and years he was never heard of; and indeed was never, *for certain*, identified as one amongst living men; but a rumour gained credit a full half century afterwards, that a very learned monk, whose left leg must have been amputated in early youth, had died in Glastonbury Abbey, having previously signalized himself by his profound knowledge of medicinal herbs, and the nature of strange compounds, the secret of which, when called on to divulge, he uniformly refused to impart, saying, "The world of wicked men could destroy God's creatures quite quickly enough without his further help."

So saying, departed from life one whom there is every reason to believe commenced his career as "Michael Smudge," the charcoal burner.

“TUMBLE-DOWN DICK.”

“His legs were so long, and his body so small,
He scarce could be seen as he climbed up a wall.”

SONG OF THE SPIDER.

PREAMBLE.

THERE is considerable doubt as to whether the tavern now so well known as “Tumble-down Dick,” occupies the precise site of a previous tavern which was known to stand somewhere about the same spot, but although the exact fact might possibly be known by reference to documents, it is scarce worth the trouble of ascertaining at the loss of valuable time.

At all events, a tavern did exist long previous to the epoch of this tale, and that too on or about the place where now stands the tavern before named. But it was not then called as it is now called; for its then appellation was, so far back as the year 1715, “The Prince of Orange,” a name, given doubtless, in honour of the great Protestant hero, but one which was also changed into that of “The Duke of Cumberland.” There is a suspicion of its having undergone a third change of name, previously to its having attained its last and most popular designation—this is, however, so very immaterial, that the name

of “The Duke of Cumberland” has been chosen at all hazards, as sufficiently indicative for the purpose of this tradition.

“TUMBLE-DOWN DICK.”

IN the year 1770, the village of Farnborough, now so well known as a prominent station on the South Western Railway, was a very obscure spot, although about as pretty a place as well could be, in which respect modern improvement has been more detrimental than otherwise. It boasted very few inhabitants, and those few scattered over a considerable space, so that, in point of strictness, the name of “village” was almost beyond its pretensions, seeing that “Cove” with its comparatively leviathan proportions, somewhat threw into the shade the modest merits of its smaller neighbour, between which and itself there existed a kind of jealous feeling amounting almost to a prohibition of social intercourse.

This being the case, Farnborough proper chose to keep itself to itself, as the saying is—preferring to exist upon its own resources rather than depend any way upon its richer neighbour for any but the most indispensable supplies; hence its few inhabitants baked their own bread, made their own butter and cheese, killed their own mutton or pork (when they happened to be so lucky as to possess any), built their own thatched hovels, and, in short, did everything for themselves which needy hands could do, and resolute wills could determine.

Lawyers and doctors were heard of, but never seen ; an undertaker, like some migratory bird, was only occasionally visible. Grocers and linen-drapers were unknown animals, and neither a carpenter nor a painter would have earned ten shillings in twelve months, if so rashly disposed as to venture upon seeking occupation ; in short, everybody did everything for himself except bury himself, which last act of our human destiny was perforce carried out by its legitimate officer, the sexton, who, as a necessary appendage to the parish church, was somewhat of a consequential individual, embodying the several occupations of parish clerk, grave digger, and schoolmaster all in one, and being, as a matter of course, next to the parson, and the one publican of the village, a man to be regarded with respect.

It must not, however, be inferred from the preceding, that there were absolutely *no* tradesmen in Farnborough at all—for there were, at all events, two who so called themselves ; the one being a blacksmith, without whom the small farms of the neighbourhood would have been sadly at a loss, and the other being a tailor in particularly small request, who could have been readily dispensed with, seeing that, like almost all of his craft, his moral habits as well as his physical garments were both of the loosest, their joint wearer being not only an idle fellow, but a sot into the bargain, thoroughly incorrigible, and a pest to all who knew him.

After this brief preamble it will be readily perceived

that the inhabitants of Farnborough were very generally poor, either farm-labourers or artisans of humble grade in the receipt of a few shillings only per week. Amongst such, the recipient of an income amounting to twenty-five pounds per annum ranked as a triton amongst minnows, and such was the case of an old man named Thomas Thrupples, who, with Martha his wife, at the ripe age of seventy-seven, inhabited a comfortable three-roomed cottage upon an annuity of the amount so named, and which was generously allotted them by the owner of Farnborough park, for services long and faithfully rendered.

This ancient couple had outlived nearly every care in life, excepting one—that one being their grandson Richard, or as he was familiarly termed Dick Thrupples, and ultimately nick-named "Tumble-down Dick," from a certain infirmity to be noted in proper place.

This lad, having lost both parents when at the age of seven years, took up his residence with the ancient couple before named, some twelve summers before the commencement of this record, but had fallen down from an apple tree, and so seriously and at the same time singularly injured his spine, that from such particular period it seemed as if his head, arms, and body had ceased to grow, whilst his legs shot out to such an unconscionable length, as to give him the appearance of that strange myth known to school boys as Mr. No-body. Nor did the marvel here end, for with the stunting of

his body there was found an equal deficiency of intellect—not that poor Dick was quite a fool, but that he continued to enact the mere child in mind after he had become a youth in body, and that at the age of twenty—the exact period of this tradition—he was even then but little removed from the same state of *boyishness* in which his original misfortune had occurred; in particular, he retained his love for all childish sports, and in consonance with his nick-name, was for ever tumbling up or tumbling down, through the amazing length of his legs, which were for ever in the way, and over which he seemed to have but very little control.

It must not, however, be omitted to state that in spite of his deformity, Dick Thrupples was rather a good-looking fellow than otherwise, having a face so extremely like a rosy-cheeked apple that many a lass would gladly have possessed herself of its bloom, but that somehow or other, Master Dick never appeared to feel any attraction towards the softer sex, as though nature had withheld from him even those common passions of mankind which give life a charm, even in the absence of all others.

It was just on attaining his twentieth year that Dick Thrupples lost his two best friends, in the persons of his old grandfather and grandmother, who both died on the same day, leaving their boyish grandson almost literally helpless in the world.

Previous to their death, a distant relative had bequeathed the old couple a legacy to the value of thirty pounds per

annum, which was a source of much gratification to them, insomuch as their own peculiar pension, of course, died with them; and the present legacy enabled them to provide for their grandchild comfortably.

With a forethought beyond their condition, the old people were so prudent as to invest their modicum of money in such a way as to secure a monthly payment of two pounds ten shillings for the support of their grandson Dick—which sum, and the manner of its payment, was intrusted to one Humphreys, a farm bailiff in the vicinity of Frimley.

It was a sad day for poor Dick when his aged protectors were borne to the grave, attended by the whole village, and he himself returned to his desolate home in spite of the numerous invitations of his commiserating friends.

For several hours did Dick Thrupples cry, like a huge schoolboy, refusing to be comforted, and for several days did the disconsolate young man bemoan his helpless condition—eating his meals uncooked, vainly endeavouring to light his own fire, and pettishly rejecting all aid from neighbours.

In particular he thrust aside the attentions of a young woman who made no secret of her desire to better his acquaintance; this young lass, Patty Smallcheek, was servant of all work at an inn or road-side tavern called the “Duke of Cumberland,” only a few hundred yards beyond the village on the road towards Farnham. She was one of those good-natured, artless, but ignorant

creatures, who in this age of knowledge would have been pronounced “an impudent hussy,” but yet was in reality a simple-minded woman who saw no wrong in speaking exactly as she thought with very scant ceremony and no reserve. She was also what is termed a “strapping figure”—meaning she was full five feet ten inches in height—and strong in proportion, being quite capable, and not at all shy, of taking her own part in a game at fisticuffs if necessity arose.

It had pleased Patty Smallcheek to fancy poor Dick Thrupples for her intended husband; and it also had pleased her to tell him so by a thousand feminine arts more eloquent than words, such, for instance, as the present of any little delicacy in season, a boiled pig’s tail, a roasted onion, or occasionally some hard-bake of her own making. She also invariably took his part in all half childish quarrels, and stood in some sort his guardian whenever a wicked jest was sought to be played upon him, such as the drawing away of a chair when he was about to sit down, and upon one occasion was nigh getting herself into serious trouble through saving her favourite from being “tripped up,” by gently tapping his assailant’s head with a rolling pin, which happened to weigh three pounds or so, and thereby fracturing his skull so badly as to necessitate his visit to a lunatic asylum.

Why Dick Thrupples should have resisted Miss Patty Smallcheek’s advances in his hour of trouble, is one of

those mysteries known only to the deeply learned in life's philosophy. Byron has said, "'Tis best to begin with a little aversion," and if this be true, then the loves of Dick and Patty argued well, for Dick would not suffer his protectress to help him in any fashion, but sate and sobbed on the door step of his cottage like a child who had broken his best toy.

At last, and only when driven by hunger, Dick Thrupples consented to take board and lodging with a poor old woman named Pipkins, and who dealt in such small commodities as needles and thread, laces, bobbins, pipe-clay, slate pencils, and, to a limited extent, in matches and tinder-boxes. Under her roof the young man found himself very comfortable for the space of two years, during which time his intellect, although it did not greatly improve in strength, yet advanced slightly, so that he forsook the companionship of absolute children, and began to associate with grown men; his chief favourites being three decidedly dissolute fellows, to wit, the blacksmith, the tailor, and the sexton—all of whom loved nothing better than to drink themselves tipsy, except to play tricks on their kind benefactor Dick, whose savings from his monthly income were all spent on them at the "Duke of Cumberland" tavern.

There was but one other "person" in all the world who had a strong claim on Dick's affection, and that one was "Jack," a tame magpie of wonderful sagacity, living

at the “Duke of Cumberland,” and generally understood to be the chief personage on that establishment.

With “Jack” Dick Thrupples had long since formed a close intimacy and was believed *almost* to converse with it rationally on subjects political, social, and sentimental. At all events, if the two friends did not absolutely converse, they assuredly understood one another, and the magpie would do Dick’s bidding when he would neither obey nor seem to understand the behests of anyone else.

For two years, as before noted, Dick Thrupples, now approaching his three and twentieth year, had lodged with poor Mrs. Pipkins, enjoying the very height of human felicity, with a splendid income of two pounds ten shillings per month, with four valued friends (including the magpie), and with one declared lover, or loveress, in the person of Patty Smallcheek—his time passing in one continued round of contentedness, varied only by the nature and frequency of his “tumbling down,” which feat he usually accomplished once in every four and twenty hours at the very least.

But now, an event was about to occur, and demands another chapter, insomuch as its character is greatly at variance with all which has preceded.

CHAPTER II.

AT about five miles, or may be six, from Farnborough, there now stands a house called "Warren's Corner," in the occupation of a wealthy bookseller from London. At the period of this tale it was in the occupation of Squire Beechborough, a gentleman of great wealth but eccentric habits; like most of his class he was a sportsman, and dearly loved to follow the hounds over a break-neck country.

Squire Beechborough had not married until late in life, and having no children by his lawful spouse had adopted his own natural son, a well educated and estimable young gentleman, as his successor; but as, unluckily, the whole of his landed estate was strictly entailed, it was out of his power to provide for this son, otherwise than by setting aside a portion of his yearly income for future contingencies.

This, Squire Beechborough had done to the extent of seventy thousand pounds; all of which was invested in government securities. But, with all this caution, *the squire had omitted to make his will*, thereby failing to secure his son's right to the property in question.

It was on a fine hunting morning in the month of November, with a "southerly wind and a cloudy sky," when the Squire, and a large field of brother sportsmen, were in full chase of a remarkably sly fox, close upon

the neighbourhood of Farnborough, when at an unlucky moment his horse first threw, and then fell down on him, smashing in his ribs and lacerating his lungs to so dreadful an extent that death, from excessive bleeding, was inevitable, unless instant relief could be obtained.

The Squire was taken to the “Duke of Cumberland” tavern, and there placed upon a bed whilst one of his friends went in search of a medical man to Farnham, a distance of six miles.

The Squire, although in frightful pain, felt the necessity of making his will without a moment’s delay; and as no lawyer could be obtained any more readily than a doctor, it was decided by his friends, that a will should be extemporised on the spot; for this purpose his son produced a small Russian leather memorandum book, and amidst the lamentation of all did the poor Squire dictate a brief will—leaving his son the whole of his available property, the said will being witnessed and signed within the period of one quarter of an hour.

No sooner was that solemn formality effected, than a rush of blood choked the Squire’s utterance, and in the confusion of the moment, coats, hats, memorandum book, and all other matters scattered about the bed, were thrown on one side—the newly executed will being amongst them.

Before any medical man could arrive, the poor Squire was a corpse; his weeping son and sorrowing friends being in the utmost consternation.

At the moment of this lamentable event several persons, including the host of the inn, entered the room, *and none passed into that adjoining, whereto the coats, hats, and papers were carried*; but nevertheless, when search came to be made for the dead man's will, NEITHER IT NOR THE RUSSIAN LEATHER MEMORANDUM BOOK COULD BE FOUND.

Great was the dismay of the Squire's party at this unaccountable loss. The Squire's son declared that he had, himself, deposited the will in the memorandum book, and one of the witnesses of the will declared he had removed every article, including the said memorandum book, from the bed to the adjoining room which he had, himself, locked. Questions were asked—accusations *almost* made—search effected—but *no will found*; and no possible mode suggested by which its loss could have occurred, unless through an open window in the adjoining room, and to which access could only have been found by means of a ladder.

Shortly after death the Squire's body was removed to his own residence, and in due time consigned to its last resting place, yet still no intelligence respecting the testamentary document came to hand; every chamber, cupboard, drawer, nook and cranny of the inn was searched, and, as a last resource, a printed placard was circulated, offering a reward of FIVE HUNDRED POUNDS for the missing will; but entirely without result.

As a matter of course the Squire's legitimate nephew

took possession, not only of the entailed estate, but also of the large sum in government securities, which his predecessor had intended for the inheritance of his son—there being no shadow of legal excuse why administration should be stayed, although a “protest” was certainly entered into against his nephew’s rather precipitate claim in the forlorn hope that the missing will might yet “turn up” somewhere. But all without avail, for six months passed over—the month of May arrived, and all hope was finally abandoned by the parties most interested.

Meanwhile Dick Thrupples continued his monotonous round of blissful indolence, living upon his income, drinking with his friends, conversing with the magpie, and tumbling down or up, as the case might be, in his usual fashion; as to his love episode with the strapping Patty Smallcheek, it also continued in “*statu quo*,” the maiden, however, keeping steadfast to her attachment, and acting his guardian angel as heretofore. Many were they who advised Dick to marry the young woman for his own comfort’s sake, but Dick invariably replied in the negative, “he did not understand what was meant by a wife; but that when he grew richer he would take her as a grandmother!”

It was a somewhat singular circumstance, that with all Dick’s easy indolence of mind touching affairs in general, he yet took reasonable care of his money—never spending one shilling beyond his monthly income, and frequently

"threatening" to save up something towards the future; a glimpse of intellect deemed very remarkable by all who knew his general want of forethought. He even used to express himself as intending to do such and such a thing when he grew "richer," till it become a standing joke against him that he should "find the Squire's will," and thus become, what he desired to be, "richer" by five hundred pounds.

It was on a sunny afternoon, towards the latter end of May, that Dick Thrupples, the blacksmith, and the sexton, entered their usual haunt, a back parlour in the "Duke of Cumberland" tavern; and the blacksmith, as a preliminary to the evening's mirth, had taken pains to arrange a chair, *with one of its legs loose*, in the place usually occupied by Dick, intending to enjoy the fun of seeing him sprawl upon the floor; but the ever watchful Patty Smallcheek had observed this benevolent intention, and determined to defeat it; for which reason she called attention to some matter out of doors, and cunningly *exchanging the two chairs*, provided for her favourite a plate of Welsh rabbit, thus ensuring his taking the right place at table.

This having been done, the wily blacksmith fell into his own trap by sprawling on the floor just as he had anticipated the enjoyment of seeing poor Dick in a similar position; and so great was the laughter of all parties standing by, that "mine host" forthwith determined on having a picture painted to commemorate the

occasion, so soon as he could find an artist equal to the "job," as he called it.*

After harmony had been restored, conversation turned upon the "lost will." Dick Thrupples was interrogated as to where he had last searched (for he searched somewhere almost every day), when a luminous idea struck the sexton, who turned abruptly towards Dick, and in a tone of earnest inquiry said, "Dick, my boy, didst ever ax the magpie?"

Now Dick had never asked the magpie, whether because he did not, himself, believe in those powers of inter-communication which were ascribed to him by his companions, or whether, simply because he believed the magpie could not tell him; but certain it is that Dick immediately responded to the sexton's question by answering, "No, but I will ask him now."

Accordingly Dick, followed by his quondam friends, sallied forth, and finding "Jack" the magpie on his usual "beat," namely, before the front of the house, inspecting the poultry, he attempted to capture the bird after his usual manner, but found, contrary to expectation, that "Jack" refused to be captured or cajoled, hopping off as fast as he was pursued, and looking suspiciously at a morsel of bread held forth as a lure.

* The picture was soon afterwards painted, representing the actual fact, and the sign of the house also changed to that of "Tumble-down Dick." It is only the popular error of to-day which supposes the sprawling figure to be that of "Dick," it being, in reality, that of the blacksmith.

"Jack's" wings had long since been clipped, the bird could therefore only hop, or at best ascend, by means of his wings, to very slight elevations from the ground, through a series of short flights; and on the present occasion exerted, to the utmost power, his abilities that way by perching firstly, upon the house-door top, next, upon the gutter over the house front, then upon a low gable point, where, supposing himself safe, he looked and breathed defiance at Dick, who forthwith sought a ladder, determined not to be outwitted by his small friend.

Just as the ladder was brought, "Jack," looking upon the proceeding as quite "unparliamentary," shifted his quarters to the top of a chimney pot from which he looked down, his head knowingly on one side, with some degree of apprehension, but nevertheless kept his post.

Now it should be told that the "Duke of Cumberland" was a tavern which had received many additions since its first building, the latest of all being a three-story wing, surmounted by a tall stack of brick built chimneys, towering high above the gable roof of old and rotten straw thatch that covered in the ancient portion of the house.

Dick had ascended, by means of his ladder, to the first roof, in hopes of capturing the magpie; but "Jack" was in a coquettish mood, and would not be captured, at least, till driven from all his resting places by sheer compulsion. With a great effort, Jack had contrived to

mount the window sill of the third story, when Dick, putting up the ladder to the roof of the old house, placed it against the wall of the brick building, in order to pursue the bird to the last of her *possible* perching places, when his usual luck followed, as a matter of course, the ladder he was ascending slipped aside, and poor Dick fell crashing through the rotten thatched roof into a space between it and the ceiling of a room below; Jack the magpie retaining his elevated post, and chuckling over the fall of his best friend, almost as if he had been a Christian.

Great was the outcry of Dick Thrupples when he found himself struggling amidst a cloud of dust, an avalanche of straw, and an uncomfortable bed of broken rafters; to rise up and shake himself vigorously was his first effort; and on finding no bones broken, to look about him was his second; but almost before he could do so, “Jack” the magpie descended of his own accord, and began to take measures of his own for inspecting the place, which was no other than a disused loft that had never been entered for many long years, and the very entrance to which had been boarded over; the only peculiarity of the place consisted in its having a chimney or air vent, descending from the same stack as served for all the rooms of the old portion of the house itself; and upon the flooring, or rafters, immediately below this lay an accumulation of odds and ends, all of which had been lost or missed for half a generation. There were old

bones, several silver tea spoons, a thimble, some lace ornaments, the remains of sundry old ballads, one or two short pipes, and, wonderful to relate, Squire Beechborough's missing will, safely folded up in the Russian leather memorandum book! all of which items were doubtless dropped down, from the chimney above, by master “Jack” the magpie.

With a shout of exultation, Dick Thrupples proclaimed his good luck, and descended from the loft, not merely a wiser but a richer man; for he obtained the five hundred pounds reward; the Squire's son obtained his rightful legacy; and Dick Thrupples consented to marry Patty Smallcheek, to the satisfaction of all parties concerned, even of the magpie, who chattered his approbation to the understanding of all.

The five hundred pounds, obtained as a reward for the lost will, Dick deposited, for safety's sake, with the before named Humphreys, from whom he obtained his monthly pension, and who had, for some years past, been collector of the assessed or King's taxes for his district, being reputed a rich and thriving man.

CHAPTER III.

It would have been very easy, as well as convenient, to have ended this story with the marriage of Dick and Patty; but truth, which is stranger than fiction, must be told, and the truth is well worth reading.

One month, exactly, after the preceding event, preparations having been made on a grand scale for the approaching wedding, Dick went, as usual, to Mr. Humphreys for his monthly stipend, as also a small addition of funds to meet coming expenses, when he was apprised of a terrible fact.

Mr. Humphreys, the rich, honest, well-to-do collector of public taxes, and the depository of numberless sums belonging to poor people (*whose banker he was supposed to be*)—had levanted—gone—disappeared—run away—was gone off to AMERICA! Upon inquiry, it was found that he had secretly disposed of his land, collected all his debts, received all available monies, and had really disappeared *in toto*.

Dreadful and astounding was the loss to very many, but to poor Dick Thrupples it was total ruin. The blow fell upon his small intellect, crushing all the little amount of energy it had ever possessed; but not so did it fall on Patty Smallcheek, who girded up her loins, brushed up her faculties, put on her best clothes, collected all her savings of several years, and finally announced her determination to follow old Humphreys and get her lover's money back, even if she had to go to AMERICA.

Of course all Farnborough thought Patty Smallcheek mad; firstly, because it was by no means sure that Humphreys had started for America, when he might have a thousand other places to choose from; and

secondly, because Patty was a poor ignorant wench who, probably, did not know that America was absolutely out of England. But Patty took her course in spite of all advice or ridicule, and walked off to London that same night, carrying all her worldly wealth, consisting of nineteen pounds five shillings and sixpence, securely sewed within her stays, leaving Dick Thrupples in care of his old hostess.

Before following the honest hearted girl on her strange journey, it will be necessary to premise, that *then*, as *now*, America was truly the favoured destination of all run-away rogues, but was not then, as now, accessible any day of the year, for the mail packets, which sailed but once a month from Liverpool, and an occasional merchant vessel, were the only means of transit. Also, that run-away bankrupts, thieves, and defaulters, were scarcely ever followed beyond the shores of the three kingdoms; no police force, of any tolerable organization, being available, and not even "Bow-Street runners" as yet invented.

So far as Old Humphreys' defalcations went, the government took little heed, seizing upon the property of the old man's sureties, without the slightest delay or remorse, and leaving them to obtain whatever restitution they could.

Such being the case, and the sort of case pretty well anticipated by the run-away collector, Patty Smallcheek's enterprise was not quite so forlorn as it looked to be.

We will now follow our brave heroine, but in order to avoid circumlocution will be very brief in our detail.

On arriving in London, Patty lost no time, but paid her money at the “Spread Eagle” in Gracechurch Street, booked herself by the waggon stage for Liverpool, and at the end of seven days from the time of leaving Farnborough, reached that *now* celebrated port, *then* only in the childhood of its commercial importance.

Taking no counsel but her own shrewdness, Patty arranged her dress so as to avoid being conspicuous, obtained information as to what vessels were about leaving port, watched every passenger who embarked, and was at last rewarded by detecting Old Humphreys, through the disguise of a juvenile wig, and clutching him on the shoulder.

“So Ize caught ee at last, old wagabone!” were the mellifluous words addressed by the Amazonian lass to her prisoner; and it would require the pencil of a Hogarth to do justice to Old Humphreys’ amazement as he recognized his capturer.

“Get away, Jezebel,” shrieked the astounded rogue, “get away—you mistake me, woman.”

“Mistake ye—is it?” again spoke Patty, “may be then your name isn’t Joe Humphreys, and ye don’t come from Frimley, and yer haven’t my Dick’s five hundred pounds in yer pocket, and yer didn’t run away with the King’s taxes, and yer—”

“Stop, stop,” cried Old Humphreys, who wished for

nothing so little as an exposure to the crowd now gathering round. "Stop, come aside with me, and I will prove you are mistaken."

Patty, who saw her bird securely caught, was nothing loath to arrange matters privately, and went with him into an open doored tavern, where, after much determination on the side of Patty, and much reluctance on the part of Old Humphreys, it was agreed that Dick Thrupples's five hundred pounds, and Patty's own nineteen pounds five shillings and sixpence should be instantly refunded by Humphreys, as the price of his departure for America, unscathed.

The old rogue essayed all means in his power to avoid this alternative, but in vain ; his victor was a determined woman, strong as a man, armed with the power to bring destruction on his head, and with the full intention of so doing, if her demands were not complied with ; he therefore unbuckled a capacious pocket-book, drew forth five Bank of England notes for one hundred pounds each, unburdened his pocket of nineteen guineas, and with a sigh like that of a dying grampus, resigned himself to his fate, taking Patty's assurance for his sole guarantee against exposure.

Calling up the landlord of the tavern, Patty Small-cheek requested him to *word a receipt*, and sign it in her name ; she forthwith appended her *mark*, and delivering the paper to Old Humphreys in a business like style, took

her departure, whilst the old rogue stood shaking in his shoes before the astonished innkeeper.

What became of Old Humphreys for several years after no one could tell, but America did not seem to agree with his health, for he was known to “turn up” again in England, still in the farming line, and was a great stickler for Tory principles. As for Patty and Dick, they married, and thrived, despite all prognostications to the contrary by all Patty’s friends.

In course of time, they became proprietors of the “Duke of Cumberland” tavern, which, after their death, was called by its present name of “Tumble-down-Dick,” to be so remembered, by all posterity, in honour of its celebrated tenant.

THE MILLER OF COVE.

“ I care for nobody, no not I,
And *nobody cares for me.*”

OLD SONG.

ABOUT the middle of last century, or more properly speaking, about the year of grace 1745, just after Charles Edward Stuart, surnamed the Pretender, had left both his friends and his enemies in the lurch, there stood in the midst of that dreary waste known as “Cove Common,” a rickety tumble-down old windmill, built after a fashion long gone by, and, at the time now alluded to, fast falling into the last stage of decay.

To those readers not versed in the topography of Hampshire, it may be necessary to state that Cove Common, even to this hour, is a dreary waste of land to the south west of “Cove,” a secluded village in the vicinity of Farnborough, and consisting, for the most part, of land unfitted for agricultural purposes, being extremely variable in its character, showing here and there patches of heather or gorse, exhibiting long deserts of sand, with a few straggling blades of grass occasionally appearing, some few trifling water courses, and occasionally a small clump of pine or fir trees, not particularly luxuriant in their growth, excepting where the common itself was traversed by the well known turnpike road

from Bagshot to Farnham, a portion of which, at the present day, exhibits the full growth of what was, a century before, a mere sapling plantation.

Dreary as was this spot at even the best of times, it was rendered more than even objectionable to travellers, through the fact of its being the one especial rendezvous of all the four winds of heaven; if there was no wind anywhere else there was plenty of it on Cove Common, and if there was a wind anywhere else it blew hurricanes on Cove Common, and if there was a wind tempest on the "Hog's Back," or on Salisbury plain, there were cyclones and typhoons rattling, tumbling, and tearing about on Cove Common, uprooting the very blades of grass, and driving up the sand in eddies and whirlpools, like the waves of a turbulent sea.

It was probably for this reason that a windmill had been erected in the locality, the only marvel being that the said mill had ever retained its integrity in a spot so entirely destitute of shelter, as was the particular one on which it appeared at the opening of this story.

Simon Burr, the occupant of this identical mill, had arrived at that locality together with his wife and infant daughter, some seventeen years and a half previously to the events now about to be related, and a brief recapitulation of intermediate occurrences is indispensable to the proper understanding of what follows. But before entering upon particulars, it is necessary to state that the "mill" in question was so situated as to stand a good mile and a half distant from "Cove" itself

and scarcely nearer to any other habitable district, so that its isolation was as complete as its desolate appearance was uninviting, rendering it a matter of great surprise to the neighbourhood that any man of common sense should have the temerity to speculate in so strange a place of business as the mill of Cove Common.

Be this as it may, at the period before specified, the mill was found to be tenanted by one Simon Burr, a heavy-made repulsive-looking man, his wife, a small, good-looking, smartly-dressed woman, and their infant daughter, a bright-eyed merry-hearted little thing, just then beginning to "toddle" about in the thirteenth month of her age.

It will be needless to enter into minute particulars regarding transactions long antecedent to the main interest of this tale; it shall therefore be said merely, that Simon Burr, who to his other unamiable qualities, added those of unsociability and extreme ignorance, appeared to care very little about business matters, and although not quite unversed in the routine of his trade, yet showed so little alacrity as to pay no heed whether much or little corn found its way up to be ground, thereby giving his neighbours reason to suspect that he and his small family did not depend on the profits of the mill for their living, absolutely—a matter in which they were probably right; but whatsoever was the exact source of the miller's income, it remained a secret locked up in the bosom of the miller's

wife, who kept that secret to herself, not even acquainting her husband with it, far less any one of the several gossiping neighbours who occasionally made their way up to the mill, almost for the sole purpose of obtaining information.

For nigh upon ten years, Simon, his wife, and child led a somewhat unobtrusive life; the miller in his stolid indifference to all things, going very little into the society of his fellow-men, avoiding the vice of drunkenness so common in his day, and keeping very early hours at the mill, being rarely out of his bed later than eight o'clock in winter, and nine in summer; his wife devoting much of her time to the education of little "Nelly," in which occupation it was hereafter found that she had evinced both knowledge and abilities beyond her apparent station in life, whilst the child herself grew apace and had become a tall, graceful, merry-hearted girl, the pet of all who knew her, and the chosen playmate of such few farmers' children as the neighbourhood afforded; all of whom were proud and lofty to claim "Nelly Burr" as their very particular friend.

But a period had now arrived when it was found necessary to place the young girl under somewhat better restraint than that of her mother; and it was ultimately determined that a famous "Seminary for young ladies," situated at Guildford, should be resorted to for the completion of Miss Nelly's education; accordingly, much to the

surprise of some, and to the envy of others, all of whom wondered "where the money was to come from," Miss Eleanor Burr, the miller's daughter, was forthwith despatched to the destination before named, there to consort with young ladies, whose parentage was, generally speaking, of much higher caste than her own, and by associating with whom she speedily became greatly improved, not merely in outward appearance, but also in all the scholastic acquirements of the day then in vogue.

For seven years, Nelly Burr continued the course of study marked out for her, during which time no perceptible change took place in the affairs of her parents, both of whom followed their usual routine of general indifference to what most people called the "pleasures of life," rarely venturing beyond the walls of their mill, which, being built upon a solid basement of brick, served both for residence and business purposes as well, and, not being so forlorn looking within as it seemed to be from without, served tolerably well for all household purposes; but suddenly, and almost without warning, there came a change. Mrs. Burr was taken ill, not very seriously, as was supposed, but yet sufficiently so to necessitate the visits of a surgeon who lived at the distance of two or three miles at least, and for whom a messenger was instantly despatched.

Before, however, the surgeon could come, Mrs. Burr became speechless, greatly to the disturbance of her husband, who evidently sought to obtain from her some in-

formation to which he attached the utmost value; vain were the attempts of Mrs. Burr to attain utterance,—at length the surgeon arrived, and it was at once pronounced that a paralytic fit had set in, which would probably terminate only with her life; at this juncture a sheet of paper, together with pen and ink, were placed before the suffering woman, but all in vain, she was powerless to make any communication, and before an hour had passed away, died, having “made no sign.”

This melancholy termination appeared to greatly affect the miller, who, sending immediately for “Nelly,” betook himself to a degree of such frantic sorrow as appeared wholly incompatible with his previous course of life, indeed so greatly, that even the poor girl herself, in the first fulness of her own grief, was compelled to attempt the lessening of her father’s trouble, lest it should fall into violence.

No sooner, however, were performed the funeral rites of Mrs. Burr, and the office of housekeeper had become devolved on Nelly,—than a most remarkable difference began to show itself in the temper and habits of the miller himself.

Never sociable or intelligent, Simon Burr became downright rough and almost cruel in his treatment of his daughter, as well as reckless in his general demeanour, going out late of nights, seeking companionship with low, brutal fellows of suspicious character, and committing all sorts of eccentricities more allied to absolute

stupidity than to intentional crime. He would quarrel with the very few harmless people who might have been his friends, and would thrust his company on others who made no secret of detesting him for his surly habits in former times; above all, he appeared to have taken deadly hatred towards a certain young gentleman, the son of a well-to-do farmer at Crondall, and whom both he and his late wife had looked upon as the affianced husband of Nelly, with the full concurrence of all parties concerned.

The young gentleman, by name, Stephen Boldash, was the handsomest lad, the best swimmer, the finest cricketer, and most powerful wrestler of all the country round, and, in the ardour of his love for his young and beautiful affianced, had not only joyfully submitted to all the miller's bad temper, but had sought to propitiate his good will by every means in his power, not, as it once seemed, without effect; but suddenly, without ostensible cause, and wholly without either rhyme or reason, the miller interdicted his visits to the mill, giving him to understand that if he ever should be seen within its precincts "he (the miller) would break every bone within his (Stephen Boldash's) skin," which elegant piece of oratory was replied to by the said Stephen to the effect that "such a game was one which two gentlemen could engage in with equal advantage," whereat Simon Burr took additional offence and would have attempted summary vengeance, but

that his half-amazed and half-annoyed disputant showed so much good temper, and so much gymnastic activity (a science in which he excelled), as fairly astonished the burly miller into something akin to admiration.

Matters had gone on in this way for six months after the death of Mrs. Burr, when the incidents about to be related took their origin.

Stephen Boldash, in defiance of the miller's interdict, had contrived to see his lady-love pretty nearly every night, choosing for his time of visit, those hours when the miller himself was invariably away from the mill. For some few weeks past, the young woman who acted in the capacity of domestic servant had been discharged, and a poor slip of a lass, from Cove, made her appearance every morning, taking her departure in the afternoon, whereby sundry domestic offices fell to the share of Nelly beyond custom. Alterations had also been made in the interior economy of the mill; the chamber once occupied by Simon and his wife being appropriated to the use of Nelly, whilst that in late occupation of the serving girl was now the miller's own bed-room, the large semi-circular apartment forming one side of entire basement of the mill being used as part sitting-room, part kitchen, and part warehouse; its floor being kept in continual disorder by the piling of sacks, both full and empty, with an admixture of other nuisances greatly distressing to the eye of a female accustomed to tidiness.

It had also lately become apparent to Nelly that the funds of the establishment were becoming somewhat low, that certain little luxuries were missing—that, in fact, her only parent was scarcely so thriving in circumstances as was his wont, and more than once had she endeavoured to arrive at a positive conclusion in the matter, only to be repulsed almost savagely.

Now, it must here be intimated, a little, no doubt, to the lowering of Miss Nelly's dignity, as a heroine of romance, that she and her father had never been upon those terms of affectionate love which should properly subsist between father and daughter; true it is she had always yielded him obedience, but it was from habit only, not from choice; and of late years the bonds of this habit had greatly loosened themselves, through the gradual decline of that regard which is the result only of respect felt and acknowledged.

Within the last two months, poor Nelly had found that her father looked upon her as an incumbrance, a something which stood in his way, a restriction on his own movements; and it was with extreme pain that the young girl found her suspicions of such becoming more warrantable every day. The miller's habits, too, were becoming somewhat mysterious; he attached himself to the company of one man in particular, a barber, named Norcutt, whose unmannerly disposition had long since driven away all customers,

leaving him no friends except such as were, like himself, at war with fortune. It was to this man Simon Burr attached himself, going out with him very late at night, in which case it was his custom to lock the door of the mill outside, leaving his daughter positively a prisoner—more even than that, he had lately not merely locked the outer door of the mill, but on several occasions even locked her up in her chamber, so that she might not await his return by sitting at the fireside for hours together in anxious or curious speculation as to the cause of his absence.

It was on the evening of a cold and windy November day, eight or nine months after the death of Mrs. Burr, that the miller and his daughter sat by the fireside of their general apartment, having finished their latest meal, and both regarding in silence the ruddy glow of the half burnt logs as they blazed steadily in the grate. Scarcely a word had passed between them for the last half hour, and the miller himself was beginning to doze in his wide, leather arm-chair, when a peculiar sound, somewhat like the whistling of a bird outside the mill, caused Nelly's ears to tingle and her cheek to be covered with a burning blush; whatever might have been the particular nature of the sound, it appeared to have escaped the miller's own observation, and was immediately followed by the uprising of the miller's daughter from her chair, and by the lighting of a tallow

candle—of that thin kind now out of use, but then known as “twenty to the pound,” giving a very poor and uncertain light.

The appearance of the apartment itself was somewhat incongruous: immediately before the fire stood the table on which was spread the material of a substantial evening meal, but it was not the heavy square table in general use which used formerly to occupy that post, being one of those which stood upon a single claw; the form of the apartment was semi-circular, and pretty nearly all the articles of furniture in general requisition filled up one end of it, whilst the other end was appropriated to the stowage of certain implements and appurtenances connected with the business of the mill. Bushel measures, tools of various kinds, sieves and baskets were piled up carelessly together, some dozen sacks, filled with corn, flour, and potatoes, stood supporting each other against the outer edge of the room, whilst a couple of dozen empty sacks were doubled up in halves and lay piled up in a heap beside those which were full—overhead, where thick rafters of solid oak served to support the story immediately above, there hung one solitary fitch of bacon, partly cut through, and several paper bags of herbs with a large dried pumpkin or gourd occupying a central spot immediately opposite the fireplace; on either side of the mantel stood a door, the one opening upon a staircase which led to Nelly’s chamber, and the other

leading into a small closet which contained the miller's own bed.

Scarcely had the candle been lighted than three distinct taps were heard on the outer door of the mill, upon hearing which, the miller started up quickly, and instead of receiving his visitor within the apartment, himself issued out, closing the door immediately afterwards.

Nelly, who, for special reasons, was tolerably well versed in the art of signalling, knew perfectly well that her father's visitor was the man Norcutt, whom she greatly disliked, fearing, as she did, that he was leading her father into mischievous courses; his mysterious "three raps" had always preceded some excursion or enterprise which kept the miller out later than usual and sent him back gloomy and discontented.

On the present occasion, Simon Burr re-entered the mill with his countenance bearing a particularly determined aspect; his first words to Nelly were, "to your chamber, wench"—a command which provoked some little remonstrance on the young lady's part, leading to a reiterated order on the part of the miller, who forthwith almost thrust his daughter up the stairs, and into her room, the door of which he locked, taking with him the key in his pocket, and afterwards descending the stairs—thinking doubtless his own actions to be free from observation.

But herein the miller was wrong—not only as

regarded this latter calculation, but also as regarded the one which preceded it—for Nelly, who had been locked up several times before, had provided herself with a second key, and had also discovered for herself a mode of observing whatever might occur in the lower apartment, by means of a tolerably broad chink in the flooring of her room, exactly at the very best spot for making observations; it may, or it may not be that she widened the chink herself, but if so, where is the woman, so devoid of curiosity, that would not have improved the circumstances in a like way under similar provocation?

No sooner had the miller descended the stair, than Nelly betook herself to the friendly chink, wherefrom she beheld her father button himself well up in a large loose wrapper which enveloped his whole person, after which she saw him take from the press cupboard, which formed a part of the partition wall of the mill, some dark-looking object and a flask containing, as she was always given to suppose, brandy or spirit;—he then drew over his brow a large leafed black hat, very different from the light-coloured head covering required by his trade, and prepared to sally forth, so different a kind of being from his usual self, that no small portion of alarm mixed itself with the surprise his daughter felt at so unusual a transformation. Before, however, Nelly could suggest any interpretation of the mystery, Simon Burr had departed,

locking the outer door of the mill, as usual, after which the sound of retreating footsteps told sufficiently that she might re-open the door of her own room, and descend to the lower apartment, if she chose so to do.

As it happened, she did so choose, bearing in mind the recollection of a certain signal, given immediately before the arrival of her father's quondam acquaintance, Norcutt.

Descending the stairs, Nelly lost no time in raking together the dying embers of the fire, and placing upon them several small logs, which soon sent forth a merry blaze, sufficient to have notified to the miller how vain had been his precaution, had he happened to turn his head from the path he was actually pursuing.

There was one, however, whose head was not turned away, for, so soon as the merry blaze gave indication of a presence within the mill, then a window, some ten feet above the ground, opened from without, and a joyous-looking pair of jet black eyes, belonging to a sun-burnt yet ruddy countenance peered saucily into the room, quickly followed by the entire corporeality of an extremely active and strongly built young man—no other than the Stephen Boldash before named as the acknowledged lover of Nelly Burr.

Jumping into the room with a bound like a cork, Stephen made scant ceremony of saluting his lady love, who, in return, after the slightest possible show of coyness,

suffered her lover to place his arm round her waist and lead her to the fireside, where the two accommodated themselves in the one large roomy leathern chair lately vacated by the miller himself, and the following conversation ensued.

Stephen Boldash.—Well, Nelly darling, you see I never break a promise, let come what may; I have vowed to see and speak with you every evening, in spite of you know who, and here I am.

Nelly.—Yes, dear Ste., but what terrible risks you run; were my father to detect you here, evil would befall us both, perhaps all there, for he is violent and you are rash; but how comes it you ventured so close without my signal being given?

S. B.—I was in a place of safety and secrecy.

N.—How? where? surely not on that side of the mill at the back of its entrance?

S. B.—No, dearest, in a better place than that. I found the mill sails stopped, so made a flying leap at the one nearest the ground, climbed up it, like a cat up a ladder, and took my station at the cross-centres, where it would have required a sharp pair of eyes, on such a night as this, to have known me from a huge spider setting in the middle of its web. Ha ha!

N.—Silly fellow, and you have run such a foolish risk of detection, or other danger, for a portionless girl like me?

S. B.—Not portionless, dear Nelly, for you have youth, beauty, and the sweetest temper in the world,

which are of more worth than all the gold and jewels in existence ; while, as for danger, why I like it, I glory in it ! besides, where and what is the danger I would not face for such a reward as this ?

Whereat Stephen Boldash, not at all shy of displaying his affection, took just so many kisses as could well be taken without drawing breath, and then was shocked to find that the face of Nelly, instead of being wreathed with smiles, was positively bathed in tears ; a matter which surprised him greatly.

There is no need to detail any further conversation between the pair, for on being tenderly pressed to communicate her grief, Nelly made a clean breast of her sorrows, telling Stephen how much cause she had to fear that the miller had taken to wicked courses, and not scrupling to inform him that Simon Burr had left the mill in company with Norcutt, a confession she might well have omitted, insomuch as Stephen acknowledged he had seen all from his position on the mill sails ; when, however, Nelly communicated the fact of her father's having armed himself with some suspicious looking weapon, Stephen immediately guessed the said weapon to be a horse pistol, in which supposition he was confirmed by seeing upon the table an ounce, or more, of coarse gunpowder, which had evidently been spilt from a flask in the darkness and hurry of a moment.

This terrible confirmation of Nelly's fears rendered the remainder of an hour's conversation the reverse of

agreeable, but notwithstanding this, time flew on quicker than was supposed, and the pair were taken at much surprise by hearing shuffling footsteps, accompanied by the voice of the miller himself, approaching the door of the mill.

Time was not for consideration, scarcely for action ; but in one moment's space, Nelly contrived to envelop the form of her lover in one of the empty sacks, before alluded to, and to place him beside those full sacks which stood close behind the others—in one moment more, she had tripped up stairs, and with her own key locked herself up again, just as if nothing had occurred since the departure of her father.

Scarcely had this been effected, than the miller opened the door, and by the whispered conversation, as well as by the shuffling noise made, it became evident that he was still accompanied by his ill-favoured companion, as also by something else—a heavy load, which the two bore in, with some difficulty, between them, and let fall upon the floor with a heavy “thud.”

Immediately afterwards the door closed, and from her post of observation up above, Nelly was enabled to observe that her father appeared as if in great trepidation, for his hand trembled violently as it essayed to thrust the tallow candle, which he had taken from the table, into the yet smouldering embers of the fire, muttering, as he did so, unintelligible words of impatience.

At length, some of the melted tallow falling on the hot embers, ignited the candle wick and produced a sudden flash of light, revealing to the poor girl's horror-stricken faculties the presence of a ghastly corpse, which was indeed the burthen brought in between her father and the man Norcutt, and which, in all the rigid agony of death contortion, lay with its glassy eyes wide open, and the clotted blood yet clinging to a wound in the jaw.

Spell-bound in horror, and with a stifled scream upon her lips, Nelly yet continued to look down upon the awful scene below. After having lit his candle, Simon Burr, and Norcutt, each surveyed the dead man's body in silence; after which they raised their eyes simultaneously, and meeting each other's glance, appeared both half stupefied. At length the miller spoke:—"A black night we have made of it;" to which Norcutt replied, "Why did the fool resist then? we had nowght for it but to stop his noise after he had bawled out." "He will bawl out no more," again spoke the miller, "and now the deed is done we had best see what it is worth; so let us search his pockets."

With this the two men proceeded to rifle the dead man's pockets, when, for the first time, it became apparent what sort of personage it was that had fallen their victim.

The murdered man, judging from his ample overcoat, and neat suit of black garments, together with his possession of a large silver watch and a bulky black

leathern pocket book, had the appearance of a lawyer, or of some confidential traveller belonging to a well-to-do employer, a sum of money too, amounting in all to several guineas, gave extra proof of his respectability, whilst the absence of the usual sword (at all times then worn by individuals calling themselves "gentlemen" whilst travelling) proved that he must have arrived to within a short distance, in some public conveyance, probably by the newly established Portsmouth light waggon.

After minutely searching, the two men, finding no more money nor other valuables, proceeded to undo the leather case, which was found to contain papers and documents only, none of which they were enabled to decipher by reason of their ignorance of reading or writing; besides which, none of the papers in question possessed any particular claim to their curiosity excepting one large sealed envelope, tied up with red tape, and bearing a superscription in large characters; this the man Norcutt took occasion to secure, whilst Simon Burr, after counting the money, and placing the gold and silver in two separate heaps, rose up from his stooping position with a deep drawn sigh, and addressing his companion in crime with a saddened voice, spoke—

"We have sold our souls and bodies for fifty-three shillings each, I wish I had had nowght to do with it."

"Thee'st a fool, Simon Burr," replied Norcutt, "if thee beest sorry, I beant; so let us e'en pocket our

gains, and put this carrion away afore the day comes to tell tales."

Hereupon arose a discussion as to how the body should be disposed of; it being ultimately decided that they should place it in a sack, and take it betwixt them to a large sheet of water called Fleet Pool, there to be thrown in at a certain place where the water was deepest.

Having thus decided, the two proceeded forthwith to thrust the murdered man's body into one of the empty sacks from that heap which had already done service in concealing one *living* body; a few minutes sufficed for the task, but instead of immediately carrying away their burthen, a sudden whim, or perhaps the sight of the money yet lying where Simon Burr had placed it, in two heaps, caused them to place the sack, with its ghastly burthen, upright against the line of sacks standing close by, and exactly next that wherein Stephen Boldash, more dead than alive, yet contrived to preserve his perpendicularity.

After pocketing their separate shares of money, Simon Burr and Norcutt fell into an argument touching their horrible crime, in which high words were nigh ending in blows, till, struck with terror lest his daughter should be disturbed from her supposed slumber, the miller ceased speaking, just as his candle, burning down in the socket of his candlestick, gave note of dissolution. Whereupon he and his comrade set about, in all haste, to carry forth their intention of bearing away the corpse;

and now occurred an incident of so singular a kind that the like was perhaps never before heard of—for the sack which held the corpse having slid down from its upright position to one horizontal, was, in the flickering light which only yet remained, suffered to lie where it fell, whilst that which contained the living body of young Stephen Boldash, was hurriedly shouldered by the miller, *in mistake*, and, by the assistance of Norcutt, carried out away from the mill!

Up to this last moment, an agony of fear and horror had chained Nelly Burr in silence; but no sooner had the miller and his companion set forth on their unholy errand, than an hysterical scream burst from her surcharged bosom, and with the peril of her lover yet uppermost in thought, she unfastened her door, rushed down the stairs, and proceeded to liberate, as she supposed, him whom she had left in such dreadful plight; but the room was in darkness—her lips refused giving utterance to a sound—she felt as if losing her senses—but with yet one effort of self-possession, searched a spot where she knew there was a tinder box, and succeeded in striking a light, though not in finding a candle.

By aid of the match, however, she was enabled to perceive the one sack lying on the floor, and judging immediately that Stephen Boldash had become insensible through fright, she put forth all her own strength, pulled away the covering and lifted up the inanimate body she supposed to be that of her lover, and placed it in a

sitting position in her father's leathern chair, making use of the most endearing terms to promote reanimation: finding all efforts vain she once more searched for a candle, and now with success, whereat a second light was rekindled, and the candle lit.

Turning its full light upon her supposed lover, the terrible certainty of truth struck a chill through the very marrow in her bones. The corpse of the murdered man sate bolt upright, or rather only leaning slightly back, with its white features, its glassy eyes, and its blood-bedabbled clothing, a hideous sight to see, and one the more appalling from the conviction it brought to mind of the terrible exchange made, by which the *living* burthen, carried away in mistake, might also be consigned to death when the fatal error should be discovered.

For a few moments surprise enveloped all the young girl's faculties; but in one brief space longer, a frantic hope of being yet in time to save her lover swallowed up all minor considerations, and caused her to rush out of the mill, the door having been left on the latch only, and with a speed such as nothing but desperation could give, make her way across the common; her white dress and dishevelled hair floating in the utmost disorder, like those of a maniac.

Leaving poor Nelly to pursue her course towards Fleet Pool, it is necessary to recur to the position of Stephen Boldash, who, when he suffered himself to be covered over by the sack, was too much bewildered to offer any

resistance, and whose extreme peril, after the miller had entered the apartment, obliged him to keep perfectly motionless as the only course of safety left under circumstances.

In breathless horror he listened to the words of the two murderers, and was more than once on the point of throwing off his disguise and attempting to rush forth and denounce them, but prudence, almost for the first time in life, restrained him, the more so that one of those whom his testimony must condemn was the father of the girl he loved.

On hearing them determine to carry the body of their victim to Fleet Pool, his hopes of escaping detection beat high, and it is just possible that the slight movements he unconsciously made caused the sack containing the body to slip down. But when he felt himself taken on the brawny shoulders of the miller, *in mistake for the body of the dead man*, a panic of uncontrollable terror seized him, and had the miller been otherwise than greatly excited, would have betrayed him to inevitable death. It so happened, however, that Simon Burr was himself labouring under too much excitement to note the difference between a living and a dead weight; consequently Stephen Boldash had time to consider his position, and wisely to determine on keeping up the cheat, if possible, until such time as he should be thrown into the water—under which circumstance he hoped to escape, being able to swim like a fish and dive like a

duck. Somewhat comforted by such a curious possibility, he now determined on "enacting the corpse" as well as he could, holding himself rigid, and giving way to no impulse of vitality. In this he succeeded pretty well, although the stifling heat of his covering was both hard to bear, and greatly irritating to his olfactory nerves. But what will not a man endure for his life's sake? Meanwhile the miller and Norcutt took their way silently, until about a mile of the distance to be overcome had been past over, when, growing tired, the miller proposed Norcutt's taking his turn for carrying the sack, to which Norcutt demurred, saying he was not strong enough, but suggesting, as Fleet Pool was yet three miles distant, that the body should be flung into the nearest pond or water-course available.

This being acceded to, it was not long before Stephen Boldash found himself brought to a sudden halt; and by the splashing of a stone thrown into water, he knew that the man Norcutt was endeavouring to ascertain if there was depth enough for the purpose contemplated.

This proving to be the case, it then became a matter of contention whether they should throw him in sack and all, or tie a stone to his neck and throw him in minus the sack—and terrible was the fear lest this last alternative should be adopted.

Fortunately, a distant sound, like the tinkling of bells, put an end to all further argument, by giving indications of an approaching team, and Stephen felt himself thrown

heels foremost into the water whilst the sack was at the same time drawn from his head, and a precipitate retreat made by the two murderers—thereby enabling him to struggle out of his watery but friendly haven, with no more damage than a smart ducking in a somewhat less savoury bathing place than he would have chosen under pleasanter circumstances. Within five minutes afterwards, he had the satisfaction to perceive advancing towards him a four wheeled waggon, drawn by a team of six horses, bound for the village of Cove, and of which he gladly availed himself by its driver's permission—heartily thankful for his deliverance.

After having thrown their supposed victim into the water, the miller and his companion Norcutt made their way together for half a mile or so, when Simon Burr, having no further fancy for the company of his partner in crime, declared his intention of proceeding alone to his home, and a curt “good night” was exchanged between them; the miller proceeding as he had stated he would, to the mill alone, whilst Norcutt took his path another way.

On reaching within sight of the mill, Simon Burr was somewhat astonished at perceiving the door open, and a light burning within; greatly discomposed, and yet fancying that he himself must have left the place thus unsecured, he made his way cautiously up the two steps, and then, only by the light of the long-wicked candle, which Nelly had left upon the table, did his eye meet the

frightful vision of his late victim, sitting up in the leathern chair, as if in mockery of the attempt to dispose of him, after the fashion just narrated.

Aghast! with his hair standing erect upon his head, and with his teeth chattering, the conscience stricken wretch stood rooted to the spot—in vain did he essay to fly—he could not move, except forward; in vain did he try to speak—his mouth seemed full of sawdust; but with eyes fascinated by the horrible object before them he tried to convince himself that the thing was still unreal, a marvellous deception of fancy; yet no! there was his own leathern chair, and in it the tangible form of him he had murdered, and with his own hands thrown into the pool of muddy water. Soon, however, a frantic determination seized him—he would advance into the mill—he would himself touch the horrible thing—he would be *sure* it was real. No sooner did this idea possess him than he had no power to resist its achievement. He dashed into the mill, seized hold of the candle, and placed his hand upon the shoulder of the corpse, shaking it so violently that it fell forward into his very arms; and so great was the terror of Simon Burr that he fancied himself embraced in a deadly struggle.

With a shriek of almost maniacal character, he flung aside the lighted candle, and upset the table, causing the few particles of gunpowder which his own carelessness had deposited, to ignite. In one moment the tablecloth,

and other combustible matters, were ablaze ; but notwithstanding this, the wretched man writhed and rolled about the floor, clasping in his arms the object of his terror, and in the wildness of his fancied combat heeded not the flames which now enveloped the entire room.

Gnashing his teeth and foaming at the mouth, Simon Burr hurled maledictions upon his supposed adversary, till human nature could bear no further strain ; overpowered by the smoke and perfectly insensible, he relaxed his hold of the dead man's body, only to fall a prey to the flames that now ascended the staircase and seized upon the upper portion of the old mill, which, being composed mostly of wood, and that too abundantly dry, was in a few moments wrapped in sheets of fire from its foundation to the very mill sails—the latter being put into quick motion by the powerful element, and adding a last and crowning feature of the catastrophe.

Thus perished the chief actor in this terrible drama, and very little more remains to be related. Stephen Boldash, from his position on the waggon before mentioned, perceived the burning of the mill, at the same time that his quick eye caught sight of a human figure, with dishevelled hair and flowing garments, running about wildly as if without method.

That this was Nelly need scarcely be told, and that he lost no time in arresting her aimless flight may also be supposed ; but it was not until the morning following

this event that the poor girl recovered her senses sufficiently, to be informed of all that had happened.

During the next day crowds of visitors found their way to the spot where a few smouldering ruins alone told that the mill had *once* been. A magisterial investigation of all the facts caused the immediate apprehension of Norcutt, upon whose person was found the sealed packet which he had taken from the dead man's pocket, and which proved to be a letter addressed to Simon Burr, conveying intelligence that the child who was supposed to be the daughter of his late wife, *before marriage*, was indeed the child of wealthy parents whose necessities had compelled them to depart for a distant part of the world, leaving their treasure in charge of Mrs. Burr, who had authority to receive the sum of two hundred pounds yearly for its maintenance; but which sum was only to be obtained through a special form of application, unknown to her husband. The letter furthermore stated that the child's parents having now returned to their native land, were desirous of reclaiming her, and had commissioned the bearer of that despatch (a partner in a legal firm at London) to present the miller with an order for five hundred pounds as a reward for the care taken of their child.

Thus, Nelly, to the great joy of all knowing her, was found *not* to be the offspring of guilt, but the happy daughter of wealthy parents who lost no time in showing their affection, and were too wise to refuse their sanction

to a marriage with Stephen Boldash, although the altered position of the young lady might have served as an excuse for refusing it.

As for the man Norcutt, the law made short work of him, and should any one think fit to inquire fuller particulars, they may be found in a certain record kept in the city of Winchester, where amongst a long list of names, alphabetically arranged—that of “James Norcutt” may even yet be seen; appended to the same being the mysterious words “*sus per coll.*”

THE "CLOCK-HOUSE" MYSTERY.

"All men wondered while the thing was a mystery, even the great Dr. Johnson; but when the mystery was cleared up, all men wondered why they had been such fools as to believe in it."—*Story of the Cock-Lane Ghost.*

THERE is no period in England's history of which Englishmen have so little reason to be proud, as that of the reign of James II., during which, closely following upon the suppression of Monmouth's rebellion, almost every post of honour, emolument, and trust, was in the possession of individuals unworthy of honour or confidence.

Setting aside all matter irrelevant to the present story, it will be sufficient to tell that the clergy—in general—were such a sorry body of rogues that they were not merely disregarded in their spiritual character, but were absolutely ignored in their social position, being, as Lord Macaulay observes, almost entirely banished from the presence of the gentry, and sent to take their meals in the servants' hall, whenever called upon to officiate in the mansions of persons above the rank of petty squires. Nor was the contempt of respectable people confined to this class especially, for it extended to nearly all such functionaries as "Justices of the peace, Churchwardens, Collectors of taxes, &c., &c.," all of whom seemed to

share in the common obloquy—possibly whether they deserved it or not. In brief, so badly was organised the machinery by which the state was governed, even in its most subordinate branches, that there is little wonder if crimes, frauds, and tyrannous practices, were suffered to go wholly unpunished, so long as they did not touch upon, or interfere with, the Royal prerogative, a matter the contempt of which alone touched His Majesty King James, always setting aside that monarch's determination to crush the Protestant religion, and re-establish Catholicism.

One of the peculiar evils of this disgraceful epoch, was the systematic neglect of Churchwardens, and parish authorities of all kinds, to exert their influence and power in the repair of public highways, and the preservation of public rights. There was, at that time, scarcely a public road throughout the entire kingdom, over which a waggon or carriage could travel ten miles a day: even those in the immediate vicinity of large towns were woefully neglected, whilst such as connected together places of minor importance, were impassable during the winter months, or only to be travelled at the risk of life or limb by reason of bog and quagmire.

This brief introduction, rendered necessary by the leading features of this legend, will account for and excuse itself as we now proceed to the business of narration.

During the latter part of the reign of King James the Second, a large tract of land, bordering upon the counties of Hampshire and Surrey, now well known as Aldershot

Camp, and its vicinity, stretching towards the vale of Ash, was of such an anomalous character as to be only described as a mixture of sand, swamp, and bog, occasionally relieved by stunted herbage, and dotted here and there with a few clumps of trees. This land, then literally no man's land, was useless for the purpose of cultivation (the science of draining being then not understood), its herbage was insufficient for the support of even stray animals, its bog was not even available for such purposes as even bog may be turned to, and its sandy portions were fit for nothing at all.

Such persons as might have proved a legal claim, did not appear to think it worth their while to do so ; and it would not, therefore, be a matter of surprise, if a few miserable "squatters," as we should now call them, chose to appropriate to themselves a portion here and there, on which to erect a hut, or otherwise shelter themselves from the weather.

One man, bolder or richer than some of his neighbours, having "squatted" upon a portion of this land, situated some four or five hundred yards distant from what is now the Greyhound Inn, upon the high road from Ash to Aldershot, and looking north-west from that place, had built for himself a house of very considerable pretensions, being of brick and stone, three stories high, and substantially roofed in with strong red tiles. The man who had built this lonely and solitary looking house lived not to tenant it, but, dying suddenly, willed it

away to his only sister's husband, one Donald Ramsay, of London, a watch and clock-maker, and not unlikely to be a descendant of the famous David Ramsay, well known to King James the First.

At the time this property fell to the share of Donald Ramsay and his wife, commercial pursuits were in so unflourishing a condition, that tradesmen of unambitious character, were fain to retire from trade, with their moderate gains intact; and of this number was Donald Ramsay. He determined on, and succeeded in, transferring his establishment for clock-making into the hands of a successor, for somewhat less than its real worth, and very gladly turned his back upon the metropolis, intending to pass the remainder of his days on his own "landed" estate, namely, on the premises willed to him by his wife's brother.

He therefore betook himself, with all his goods and chattels, to the lonely house before described, but had no sooner done so, than an ague carried off his wife, leaving the childless old man to pass the rest of his days as he best might, in such companionship as the neighbourhood afforded, or in the pursuit of such occupation as circumstances might turn up.

For a while he remained in seclusion, his domestic affairs being conducted by a staid matronly female, long past the age of suspicious dealings with the sterner sex. But absolute seclusion did not suit Donald Ramsay after his experience of town life—he pined for the companion-

ship of thought, for occupation, and for a definite object in life. His income was sufficient for all reasonable wants, he was content to remain single, although not more than fifty years of age, and he had no desire to shift his quarters, although the loneliness of his house was greater than bargained for, and its inaccessibility a great drawback to social intercourse with such neighbours as might be found if sought.

After a few months' residence, and finding that none of his neighbours sought him, Donald Ramsay determined on endeavouring to conciliate them by personally seeking their acquaintance, but found only three individuals within reach, whose position, being accessible to him, was worthy of possible cultivation; these three were the parish clergyman, or parson of Aldershot, one Simon Bullockwash, a man said to be of considerable scholastic acquirements, but of dissolute drunken habits, the other two were Gideon Walsh and Thomas Mutton, the two churchwardens of the parish, boon companions and worthy associates of their superior, the Rev. Simon Bullockwash.

A few very short interviews with these gentlemen, convinced Donald Ramsay that the companionship he sought lay not in their direction, and he was fain to rely upon the resource of his books, which he had brought with him, in mechanical pursuits, having also the tools and certain material of his old trade, and above all, in certain astronomical studies which had been his ambition in early life, and in order to further which, he had con-

verted the attic chamber of his house into a sort of observatory, by extending its windows and adding a balcony or extra stage, giving his tall house the appearance of being exceedingly tall for its width.

After having passed twelve months in his lonely residence, Donald Ramsay at length formed one promising acquaintance in the person of a gentleman living at the obscure village of Farnborough, and whose name was Bateman. He was independent, but of small means, and had an only son whose inclination led him towards mechanical pursuits as an amusement only, the ingenuity of clock-making being one which took his fancy, impressing upon his mind the vague idea of his acquiring, in time, the long supposed feasibility of perpetual motion.

Mr. Bateman, the elder, was a plain common sense gentleman, of no peculiar or individual character, but Mr. Bateman, the younger, was a strange mixture of imagination, and matter of fact—an innate poet, and yet a keen observer of matter of fact things. It was his delight to pass whole days, nay weeks, in the large lumbering half workshop, half observatory, of Donald Ramsay, acquiring knowledge of many kinds, but without any definite pursuit. At length it was agreed on between young Bateman and Donald Ramsay to *build* a clock of gigantic proportions—Ramsay finding the money, and directing the manufacture, whilst young Bateman gave the utmost of his time and labour.

This clock was to be made on a very comprehensive

plan, somewhat after the kind spoken of as fashioned in Holland, notifying the month of the year, the day of the week as well as month, and several other additions to the ordinary seven-day clock then beginning to come in use.

Two years passed away before this clock was completed, during which time Donald Ramsay had several times visited London to purchase materials, and had spent no less a sum than twenty pounds out of his own pocket, a circumstance scarcely calculated on by the shrewd Scotsman, whose love for the "siller" was very considerable. Still the honest craftsman did not much regret the expense, seeing that after all he had done something beyond the common run, and had got something tangible to show for the outlay.

It was a great day for Donald Ramsay and young Bateman, when their clock was to be for the first time seen by any other eyes than those of its makers ; and also a great day for old Mr. Bateman, when he, and several friends, determined on making a journey from Farnborough in order to inspect the work upon which his son's ingenuity had been, in part, expended.

A fine morning in the month of October, A.D. 1690, saw Donald Ramsay and young Bateman eagerly awaiting their expected guests, with their wonderful clock—its huge face, nigh two feet in diameter, covered over with a linen cloth, and its ponderous weights (attached by short cords only, there being no room for lengthened

ones) dangling nearly to the floor of the workroom, and its pendulum, six feet in length, describing its segments of a circle to the music of its own loud "tick, tick, tick."

In due time arrived, not only Mr. Bateman, the elder, and his several friends, but, also, the Rev. Simon Bullockwash, and the two churchwardens, Gideon Walsh and Thomas Mutton, to each and all of whom the worthy clock-maker did the honours of the domicile, by inviting to a substantial dinner, or rather luncheon, of cold boiled beef and strong ale; after which the entire party was ushered into the workroom, and the face of the wonderful clock uncovered after all due ceremony.

An exact description of this piece of mechanism will not be needed, insomuch as in these days of mechanical wonders there is scarcely anything which can be wondered at, and our worthy clock-maker had only done that which any mechanic of education would deem a mere trifle, but in the days of which this legend takes cognizance, a clock that told the day of the week, the week of the year, and the age of the moon was no small wonder, and it was, therefore, with acclamations of astonishment that all voices recorded their praise of the cumbersome-looking collection of weights, cog-wheels, pullies, and cranks, faced by a moderately ill-painted dial plate (the work of Donald himself), showing exact likenesses of the sun, moon, and stars, according to the artist's best ability.

Of those who were loudest in the commendations the Rev. Simon Bullockwash must be placed foremost. He examined the clock with the air of an amateur in mechanism, conversed over technicalities, commended the exactness of Ramsay's arithmetical calculations, and displayed a much greater knowledge of mechanical matters than his host had ever given credit for, thereby winning for himself a higher place than he had previously taken in the clock-maker's estimation, and concluded his laudations by expressing a wish that the parish church of Aldershot should have a clock placed in its tower, the want of such a thing being a standing reproach to the inhabitants.

This last observation having been coincided in by the two churchwardens, who almost always re-echoed the opinion of their superior, the party broke up, Mr. Bateman and his friends to their home at Farnborough, and the Rev. Mr. Bullockwash, with his two boon companions, to their haunt at the Greyhound Inn, there to booze away the remainder of the day, and possibly the night as well, such being their frequent custom.

The action of this legend must now halt for the space of two years, at the end of which time an event took place of considerable importance, being no other than the death of Mr. Bateman, the elder, which occurred in the ordinary course of nature only, but produced important results, as time will show.

Amongst other provisions in the will of Mr. Bate-

man, was that of the sum of thirty pounds for a clock to be placed in the tower of Aldershot Church.

Now, there is no doubt that the clock intended was the identical one upon which Mr. Bateman's own son was so long employed, and the thirty pounds to be given in payment was intended to re-imburse Donald Ramsay for the expense he had been put to in constructing it. But Mr. Bateman had made his own will, employing no lawyer, and the consequence was, as usual in such cases, that the will was informal upon many points; not so much so as to deprive young Bateman of his rights, but sufficiently to admit of several misconstructions in minor matters; and in respect of the clock, was very indefinite indeed.

The only matter quite certain was, that the thirty pounds to be paid for a clock, was to be paid through the office of the two existing churchwardens, and in accordance with this provision was so paid by young Mr. Bateman, in full expectation that it would be handed over to Donald Ramsay in exchange for his clock.

But in this both Mr. Bateman and Donald Ramsay were mistaken, for week after week passed by; whilst hour after hour saw the two churchwardens and the Rev. Simon Bullockwash boozing and boozing away over their cups of strong wine, and yet stronger spirits, at the Greyhound tavern, each particular "booze" costing two or three crown pieces; and each crown piece being a constituent part of Mr. Bateman's thirty

pounds' legacy, till, after the period of four months, not a coin was left of the entire sum; all having been expended on liquor, even to the very last fraction; and yet no one had authority to call any one of the three delinquents to account—the two churchwardens being legally and morally irresponsible—or if partially so, only to their superior officer, the Rev. Simon Bullock-wash, who was responsible to nobody.

Matters having arrived at this point, Donald Ramsay, in disgust at the ill treatment he had experienced, determined on fitting up his famous clock at his own place, but finding it necessary to have a greater depth of fall for the weights of his machinery than could be conveniently arranged within his house, decided, after much cogitation, on erecting the clock just as he would have erected it in a church tower, namely, with its face high up, on the outside of his house, whilst an ingenious provision for its ropes and weights was made by digging a kind of well, with a drain attached to carry off all moisture.

In order to effect this last provision, he had recourse to the son of his housekeeper—an honest youth enough, and one of some talents in his way, especially in the matter of well-sinking and excavation. This youth, therefore, after digging in the sandy soil upon which Donald Ramsay's house was built, about six feet downwards—thereby enabling the clock ropes to have a fall of twenty-two feet or more, found it necessary, in order for

to carry off all undue moisture, to construct a drain of tiles one hundred yards, or nearly so, which drain was made terminable at a certain outlet, nigh to which, he, himself, had constructed a hut for his own residence.

Donald Ramsay's plan having been satisfactorily carried out, his famous clock was at length made manifest to such as chose to view it, and in course of time gave to his domicile the name of "THE CLOCK HOUSE."

This story must again halt for the space of two years, during which political affairs went on from bad to worse, and the administration of all public matters became totally unchecked, except where they were interfered with by illegal and perversely interested persons. Parson Bullockwash and his two worthy colleagues (still in office because no one took the trouble to kick them out) continued, as usual, to drink all parish proceeds which came into their hands; the roads and lanes in their district were all impassable; the church was left with its door unhinged, and its sittings broken down, and an unusually wet season had converted almost all the bog-land stretching away from Aldershot village to Farnborough, into a marsh, leaving only such sandy portions as were elevated above the rest safe to travel over.

a Donald Ramsay's house—now generally designated as "The Clock House," stood upon a patch of sandy soil, piece very slightly elevated; but all between it and

Farnborough was either bog-land, or absolutely covered with water; and yet there was a road through all, formed of stepping stones, small sandy ridges, and, here and there, patches of grass through which the clockmaker contrived once a week to penetrate, for the purpose of visiting his friend Mr. Bateman, on which occasions, if it were moonlight, he was sometimes induced to stop after sunset; although he never ventured to prolong his visit beyond daylight on any other occasions. He, moreover, always adopted the precaution of having a well trimmed lamp lighted in his observatory even on moonlit nights, to serve as a sort of beacon; and which was always carefully tended by his housekeeper.

It was on a bright frosty day in January, A.D. 1694, that Donald Ramsay, journeying over the marsh to visit his friend Mr. Bateman, happened to meet the Rev. Simon Bullockwash coming from an opposite direction; that some words of altercation passed between them, is pretty certain, but are unnecessary to be recorded here. All that is accurately known is, that the clockmaker, after passing several hours with his friend at Farnborough, set forth on his journey home by the light of a brilliant moon, somewhat later than usual, namely, at six o'clock, saying, "that he should pick his way easily enough across the swamp; the ground being a little harder than usual, by reason of a frost, and his beacon light specially made ready for his housekeeper to light at five o'clock."

We must now introduce our readers to the parlour, or private receiving room of the "Greyhound" tavern, where, seated in their accustomed places, were to be found the Rev. Simon Bullockwash and his two inseparable companions, Gideon Walsh and Thomas Mutton.

The first mentioned of these three—a jovial, red-faced, and rotund personage, wearing a wig and long flowing bands after the fashion of his day, looked more like a farmer than a clergyman, and wore upon his countenance a strange mixture of low humour with a shrewd intelligence; he also gave signs of being a little the worse for liquor, and to complete the unclerical nature of his "tout ensemble," smoked a pipe of tobacco, at least one clear yard long.

Gideon Walsh and Thomas Mutton were each and both "men after their master's own heart," being, like him, bloated although seasoned drunkards, only far lower in the intellectual scale, as well as still more disreputable in a social point of view; these two, like their master, smoked long pipes.

The three sat cosily enough beside a large wood fire; the time being seven in the evening, and the drink placed before them being strong hot punch.

"So you met the clockmaker, this morning, crossing the marsh?" said Thomas Mutton, addressing his reverend friend.

"Aye, that I did," replied Parson Bullockwash, "and told him a piece of my mind, too, which he will scarcely forget."

"What didst tell un," spoke Gideon Walsh.

"Never you mind," again spoke the Parson—"our quarrel is our own—he has no right to call me to account whatever he may you; it was you, not I, who received old Bateman's money."

"But you who counselled us to spend it—and who helped to drink it too," chuckled Thomas Mutton—

"And who ought to set un a better example," said Gideon Walsh.

"All three of us are pretty well alike for the matter of that," responded the Parson, "but till we find some one qualified to catechize us in the matter, let us be merry—'Dum vivimus, vivamus,' which being translated from the Latin of King Solomon, means—'Let us get drunk whilst we can,' so let us have a toast."

Hereupon the hopeful trio filled their glasses with steaming punch, and stood up.

"Here," shouted the Rev. Simon Bullockwash, "here is, may that infernal clockmaker, Donald Ramsay, tumble into a bog, some day, and get smothered."

Immediately upon which the three half drunken reprobates shouted their delight in an uproarious chorus of cheers,—the punch bowl being upset in the excitement of the moment, and a fresh one speedily called for.

There is no need to detail any more of the conversation between these worthies, our concern being only in its upshot, which was as follows:—that it would

be a very pretty piece of innocent fun to take a ladder from the inn—visit the clockmaker's house—place the ladder outside—open the window, and blow out the lamp which served as a beacon, and afterwards to decamp as quickly as possible for their several homes.

Filled with the humorous and humane idea, the trio sallied forth from the inn—but found a change of weather had taken place, for the moon, which in the early part of the evening was brightly shining, now hid herself behind dark clouds, and a thick fog enveloped all around, leaving scarce sufficient light for the three to pick their way along, especially as a deep hole, full of black, stagnant water, interposed between the high road and their place of destination.

Heedless of all obstacles, and more than two-thirds drunk, the Rev. Simon Bullockwash, Gideon Walsh, and Thomas Mutton, sallied forth on their errand, carrying between them a long, strong ladder from the inn-yard, and succeeded in reaching the clock-maker's house.

By this time, it wanted only a few minutes to eight o'clock ; and, as the beacon-lamp was yet burning, there existed no doubt that the clock-maker was still away from home.

With somewhat unsteady hands, the ladder was adjusted, the window opened, and, by the hands of the Rev. Simon Bullockwash, was the beacon-lamp—which stood on a table quite close to the window—deprived of

its light : THE LIGHT WHICH WAS TO HAVE LIGHTED THE POOR CLOCK-MAKER TO HIS HOME.

This wicked deed done, the clock struck eight ; and, whilst its last vibrations were yet sounding, the three conspirators, as they may be justly called, took their departure for those homes which two out of the three were destined never to reach, for, by the time they had succeeded in removing the ladder, all three were so overcome by the fumes of liquor, acted on by the cold night air, that they were fairly drunk and incapable—Thomas Mutton being the only one who succeeded in reaching his home : the Rev. Simon Bullockwash and his crony, Gideon Walsh, both falling into the deep pool before mentioned, and being found there, stone dead, the following morning.

Had the tragedy here ended, poetic justice would have been sufficiently done. But it did not here end ; for, unfortunately, Donald Ramsay, the worthy clock-maker, fell into the very trap which was laid for him, having, through the loss of his accustomed beacon, and also through the density of the fog which arose from the marsh through which he was passing, floundered into a deep morass, which occupied a space on the western side of what is called "North Town" at the present moment—and in that wretched plight must have met his death through cold and cramp, for, when found, the upper part of his body was still above water, whilst his feet and legs were imbedded in slime.

Thus ended the "tragedy" of the Clock-House: but not so the entire interest of our tale, for there ensued a mystery which needs some little preparation before the telling.

On the day following these events, the body of the Rev. Simon Bullockwash, as also that of Gideon Walsh, were found floating on the surface of the stagnant pool, as before told, and, on the following day, that of Donald Ramsay.

Great was the consternation of all the neighbourhood, and great the indignation of many, particularly after—on the confession of Thomas Mutton—the truth of the matter became known. An inquest was held on all three of the bodies, which resulted in a verdict of "died by misadventure"—the Coroner "reprimanding" Thomas Mutton with all due solemnity, and the clergyman of "Ash" burying the three bodies with all due formality.

Now, and not till now, Mr. Bateman, as the only friend of the late worthy clock-maker, took upon himself to examine the papers of his late friend, in order to ascertain if any will was made, or if any other document could furnish the information requisite for communicating with his relatives. But, amidst the very few papers found, nothing bearing upon either point came to light. The old housekeeper had never heard him mention the name of any relative, and a journey to London failed to obtain from the clock-maker's successor in trade any clue to a heir-at-law, or any other relative.

Having done all in his power, Mr. Bateman determined on shutting up the clock-maker's house very securely, and waiting till information through some other channel should turn up; he accordingly transferred a few necessary articles of use from the house itself to the hut built by the clock-maker's occasional servant, namely, the son of his old housekeeper, to which the woman herself was contented to retire. And, having so done, he caused the windows to be boarded up, and the door to be safely barricaded in such manner that no robber should break in, or mischievous person commit damage; after which, and at the expiration of eight days only, the once famous Clock-House was left to its solitude—a gloomy memorial of the past.

As a matter of course, Donald Ramsay's famous clock had stopped several days before the final locking up of his domicile, and the neighbourhood, which had up to that time greatly rejoiced in its punctual striking of the hours, began to note the loss with regret and lamentation, when suddenly, on the evening of the ninth day, and whilst the air was cold and calm, the hour of EIGHT tolled slowly and distinctly, as of yore, from the shut-up Clock-House! Amazed, and almost doubting his ears, the landlord of the "Greyhound" Tavern, now almost deserted since the death of its two best customers, rushed wildly up towards the direction of the mysterious sound, being joined on his way by several other wondering parishioners. Whether or not they expected the clock

to re-strike the hour of eight, is not evident; but certain it is that, by the light of the just rising moon, they looked up, open-mouthed, at the house itself, seeing, of course, nothing but what they had seen a thousand times before. Questioning each other, doubting, and incredulous of their own senses, they muttered their astonishment, talked about ghosts, and ultimately departed, expressing their joint intention of being ON THE SPOT the evening of the next day, to hear if the clock would again strike.

It very soon got noised about that something mysterious had occurred, and might occur again; the old woman of the hut was called upon to know if she had heard the clock strike, but she, being very deaf, had heard nothing of the kind, and had, besides, been in her bed sound asleep long before the hour of eight.

On the night following, even so early as six o'clock, and whilst it was yet very dark, — the moon not being due till seven, a crowd of some dozen men, women, and children, assembled before the mysterious house, expecting, no one knew exactly what, but with their imaginations speculating on various possibilities. It was commented upon, that the hour of eight was precisely the hour when, according to Thomas Mutton's confession, the beacon light had been put out, and that, consequently, that hour might be the identical hour on which the honest clock-maker had fallen or stumbled into the quagmire, or even the very moment of his very death. Of

course, in event of such being the case, it must be the clock-maker's own ghost that tolled the hour of eight.

After waiting nigh two hours, general expectation grew to its height, one female spectator, or rather expectant, declared she should faint if the clock really should strike the hour; another declared she should do nothing of the sort, but immediately knock at the house door, and demand admittance; some of the men declared one thing, some another, but all agreed that if the clock should strike, it would be a wonderful thing indeed, and one to be looked upon as a *striking* evidence of the existence of ghosts.

At length the hour of eight approached, according to the evidence of a watch possessed by the landlord of the "Greyhound" tavern, and, lo!—exactly as its hand was upon the expectant hour, there slowly, clearly, and loudly boomed the eight distinct sounds of the Clock-house bell, exactly as it used to sound when the clock-maker himself was alive!!!

A fact so undeniable and astounding could not fail of producing an extraordinary effect upon a superstitious audience. The woman who declared "she should knock for admittance" was the first to faint away outright with terror, whilst she who declared "she should faint" thought better of it, and began to mutter a "paternoster" (being a Catholic). As for the men, some of them, bolder than the rest, went straight away up to the house, examined its door-fastenings with their hands, as if ex-

pecting to find them unlocked, but without result, others, awe-stricken, gaped at the dark outline of the house itself as it cut harshly against the still cold sky, whilst a profound and inexplicable superstition hung over all more or less, as each one departed severally home, thence to tell the tale of mystery wide-spreading around.

It was noticed as somewhat singular that Thomas Mutton was not amongst those who bore oral testimony to this extraordinary fact; he having declined the invitation to become one amongst them, but it was afterwards ascertained that he too had been a listener, though a solitary one, to the solemn tolling of that awful bell; also, that he went, afterwards, home, took to his bed, and became so exceedingly ill that his friends were obliged to call an humble professor of the art of medicine, who pronounced his patient "charmed," and under the necessity of paying him (the professor aforesaid) the sum of two shillings per diem every day, until further notice, in return for pills, potions, and phlebotomy, &c.

On the day but one following this event, the clock striking eight as before in the intermediate time, a deputation of villagers, from Aldershot, made its way to the residence of Mr. Bateman, at Farnborough; but were sadly disappointed in finding that gentleman had departed on a long pilgrimage to Scotland; having, at length, obtained some clue to the relatives of the deceased Donald Ramsay, whom he was most anxious to acquaint with the fact of their good fortune in possessing

a reversionary interest in the clock-maker's solid property.

As posting, travelling, and post letter carrying were all in their infancy one hundred and fifty years ago, it was impossible to recall Mr. Bateman, and he was, therefore, suffered to progress on his way unchecked; but meanwhile the news of some mysterious visitation or other continued to spread abroad; and for some weeks afterwards a score or two of idlers were sure to be congregated near the now mysterious Clock-house, awaiting the moment when its ghostly clock should strike the hour of eight, which it never failed to do, up to the period of two months from the time of its mysterious commencement.

Political events were occurring of engrossing moment; men's minds were full of the expected crisis, travelling was dangerous, and the various sections of society each afraid of the other; but notwithstanding all this, many visitors from London found their way to the lonely Clock-house, wondering, speculating, and sometimes doubting the evidence of their own senses; but so surely as the hour of eight in each evening arrived, so surely did the mysterious clock strike its mysterious eight strokes; and yet every eye that scanned and every hand that sought the fastenings of that mysterious house, failed to detect any flaw in its perfect inviolability. It became clear at least, that if any living creature existed within the house, he, she, or it must live chameleon-like, on air; for no

provisions of any kind could possibly find entrance, and no inhabitant could find egress, without being seen.

Two months had elapsed, and the newly appointed clergyman of Aldershot, a very different sort of individual from his predecessor, had begun to entertain serious thoughts of seeking forcible entrance to the Clock-house, when it was rumoured that Mr. Bateman had returned safely from Scotland with an undeniably legal heir to the property of the late Donald Ramsay.

This rumour turning out true, all the inhabitants of Aldershot were congregated on an appointed day, when it was declared that the Clock-house should be publicly opened, and the mystery of its ghostly tenant solved—if solvable.

Accordingly, at the hour of nine, on the morning of March 1697, Mr. Bateman, Mr. Alexander M'Evoy from Scotland, the vicar of Aldershot, and a large assemblage of tradesmen, farmers, farm-labourers, and artisans, together with women and children, found themselves congregated before the lonely Clock-house, expecting some wonderful revelation.

Mr. Bateman, who had himself superintended the fastenings of the house, gave directions for their being removed, and whilst so doing was particular in observing that none had been tampered with even in the slightest degree. One by one the door barriers were removed, as well as the boards from the lower windows; and it was not without trepidation that Mr. Bateman's own hands

turned, not without some difficulty, the large coarsely made key in the rusted lock, thereby affording him, and his special associates, entrance to the house itself.

Three persons only made their way inside, namely, Mr. Bateman, Mr. M'Evoy, and the vicar of Aldershot, first into the half empty lower rooms, where all was intact, solitary, and covered with dust, giving abundant evidence of having never been violated by mortal touch; thence into the chambers above, where all was equally undisturbed; and lastly, into the upper chamber itself, whence was visible the entire works of the mysterious clock as motionless and solitary as of old, when one of its constructors, now alas! no longer amongst the living, was in the habit of looking upon its mechanism with the fond eyes of vanity.

Apparently all was as it had been left, not a thing had been displaced, nor even touched, for the dust of more than two months was visible and tangible on everything within sight.

This result being communicated to the expectant crowd outside, by whom the intelligence was received in silence, Mr. Bateman and friends descended to the basement story, determined, after visiting the old housekeeper, to watch, personally, on the premises, until the hour of that mysterious visitation should come, when the trick, if trick it were, should be at once exposed.

Accordingly, to the hut of the old housekeeper Mr. Bateman went, accompanied by his two friends, and a

very long interview ensued during which high words were heard, supplications, and even some slight laughter, then a long consultation ensued, followed by an equally long silence—the crowd outside gradually diminishing until it numbered merely a score or so, amongst whom was the landlord of the "Greyhound." After an hour, Mr. Bateman, Mr. M'Evoy, and the vicar, reissued from the hut, and the latter-named gentleman, taking upon himself the office of spokesman, acquainted all within hearing that the mystery of the Clock-house was at an end—that the clock would never more strike—that, in fact it would be taken down, packed off and transported, together with all the furniture of the house—away, far from Aldershot, and the very house itself dismantled or even pulled down, seeing that it was built on land that did not belong to the builder. As for the ghost, he declared that measures had been effectually taken for laying it; that, in fact, it was no longer an inhabitant of this world, and would never more trouble anybody.

The crowd departed, evidently disappointed in the result of the day's enquiry. Mr. Bateman and all others concerned went back to their homes; but that same evening witnessed another congregation on the same spot as before, with the same expectation and the same curiosity, awaiting the accustomed striking of the clock, in which expectation they were doomed to be disappointed—for that clock had struck its last stroke—the

ghost was clearly laid, and the wonder-seeking crowd had no resource but to disperse itself home—never more to assemble for the same purpose, but ever yet to cling with superstitious fear to the memory of that strange mystery.

It was three or four weeks after the "laying of the ghost," that an event occurred which explained, but not to the popular satisfaction, how this strange matter had come to pass. The Clock-house being dismantled of its contents, and its doors, windows, &c., &c., carted off, leaving a mere shell behind, curiosity led many persons to examine what remained of the house itself, and especially became directed to the dry well, into which the heavy weights of the wonderful clock had been arranged to fall. As the depth was but six or seven feet, one or two inquisitive lads descended, and whilst groping about, found a piece of small rope projecting from the covered drain passage, mentioned in an earlier portion of this legend, as made to carry off all moisture detrimental to its position. This piece of rope, on being violently pulled, broke off to the length of twenty feet, thereby proving a continuation of its length somewhere or other. General curiosity was aroused, the drain itself was excavated, and proved to terminate at the hut wherein had dwelt the old housekeeper and her son, who had suddenly disappeared together several days before. A continuation of the broken rope was found to extend the remain-

der of the way, terminating, as all expected to find it, in the hut itself. Surmise instantly connected this artifice with the circumstance of mystery which had puzzled so many for so long a time. There could, indeed, be little doubt that the very ingenious son of the old woman, and who had constructed the drain itself, had contrived, for motives scarcely clear, to attach the rope now discovered to the machinery by which the clock bell was struck, and so contrived to mystify an entire neighbourhood. It was also surmised that he had confessed the fraud to Mr. Bateman and his two friends, who chose rather to leave the mystery unexplained than to hazard a communication which might bring mischief upon the old housekeeper, who was perfectly innocent of all participation in the fraud, and in so doing it is very probable he acted wisely, as all experience has gone to prove that the world in general is more indignant for being set right, in matters of superstition, than it is for being imposed on.

Thus ended the "Clock-house mystery," one now entirely forgotten in the neighbourhood of its occurrence, and but dimly shadowed forth in a mere name, which yet clings—for no apparent reason—to a house of low repute in Aldershot town, as also to some private residence in the neighbourhood of the Ash-road.

What became of Mr. Bateman and the Scotch gentleman Mr. McEvoy, no record serves to tell. The Greyhound tavern yet exists, a well-built private mansion occupies

very nearly the precise spot whereon stood the "Clock-house," and the descendants of Thomas Mutton now live somewhere at the east end of London, dealing, we believe, in the very article represented by their peculiar name.

ST. HILDA.—A LEGEND OF “THE LADYE-HOUSE.”

“It was a custom, often practised, for girls to be vowed to celibacy from their birth, and yet not to compel them to take the black veil; and it was sometimes held sufficient that they should keep themselves chaste only, habiting themselves in white. Hence the phrase, ‘*voué au blanc*,’ or ‘vowed to the white.’”—T. C. GRATTAN.

PREAMBLE.

IN the district of “Upper Hale,” some good half mile on the road from Hale (proper) towards Crondall, there stands a domicile bearing the singular name of “The Ladye-House.” The building in question is of a most unpretentious, not to say vulgar, character, and offers no one feature of interest to either the antiquary or wayfarer, except that of its singular name, to account for which the author of these pages has been at some pains and research almost, yet not entirely, in vain.

It would be a needless occupation of the reader’s time to recount the many failures encountered amidst endeavours to obtain information from the peasants and general inhabitants of the neighbourhood, not one of whom offered to take the slightest interest in the matter, and it was only by the merest chance that one

small atom of intelligence turned up, whereby a coincidence of tangible form was discovered to exist between "The Ladye-House" and Farnham Castle, in the following particular, which, after all, is but a mere rumour.

On digging for a cesspit, many, many years ago, in a portion of the garden land attached to the house in question, there was discovered a few corner blocks of masonry, which had evidently formed the angle of some foundation wall of very ancient build. On a further examination it was found that the stone of which it was constructed was of character identical with that of the "old keep" at Farnham Castle.

Unfortunately there is no record extant as to what became of this piece of masonry, whether it was broken up, or whether it even yet remains buried in the earth, but the inference to be thence drawn is, that a building of some especially solid kind once existed on that particular spot, and one which, very probably, might have given rise to the peculiar name which now attaches. At all events, a very singular legend connected with the early days of Farnham Castle, has suggested the following *possible* solution of a mystery which appears, otherwise, to be unfathomable.

The reader will, therefore, please to accept the annexed apocryphal legend for what it is worth:—

THE LEGEND.

WHEN Henry of Blois, brother to King Stephen, a titular bishop as well as an actual prince, had succeeded in building for himself the Castle of Farnham, which he did at remarkably small expense, seeing that he “appropriated” the stone from the estate of a neighbouring landowner, and “pressed” every able-bodied vassal into his service, as labourers, for *love of the Church*, he is said to have been called away to France on, what is now termed, in military phrase, “urgent private affairs”; being indeed no other than the necessity of doing battle for his territorial rights, which, just then, were in some jeopardy.

Of course, it need scarcely be told that very many bishops in those remote days wore more of the breastplate than the sacerdotal robe, and more naturally inclined to the sword than to the crozier. Henry of Blois was not only of such particular mind, but was, perhaps, the most warlike of all his brethren, being an able leader in the field, and a knight of much prowess, as evinced by his having become victor in no less than eight single combats.

Now Henry de Blois, bishop and warrior, being called away on foreign service, just as he had finished his beautiful and convenient palatial residence, was sadly at a loss to find some trustworthy soldier and friend to whom he might entrust the safety of his castle during

his absence abroad. As for the brave knights of his retinue, he wanted them all for service in the field, he could not spare even one, but ultimately bethought him of a friend whose peculiar intimacy with himself was of a kind which must be recorded, in order to justify events.

At the period of this tale, a vast but justifiable animosity existed between all individuals of the Anglo-Saxon race and those of their Norman conquerors. Hastings and its bitter memories rankled in the hearts of all owning British blood, and led to innumerable deeds of cruelty as well as gross injustice. It had happened that in one of these bitter broils, which were of almost daily occurrence between the two factions of Anglo-Saxons and Anglo-Normans, that an impoverished Thane, named Englebert, having been overcome in a skirmish by one of the most powerful Norman knights, had had his sword arm barbarously *cut off* by his enemy, who, not satisfied with the infliction of this terrible vengeance, was about to have cut off the other arm likewise, when Henry, the bishop-prince, touched, possibly, with a tinge of Christian mercy, not only prevented such further outrage, but absolutely caused the poor Thane to be carried to his newly—or then only partly—erected castle of Farnham, and attended by a very learned leech, by whom he was as sufficiently restored to health as the knowledge of those days permitted.

This incident—the best which is recorded of the valiant bishop—was the means of cementing a somewhat unusual friendship between the two representatives of rival races. Thane Englebert, together with his wife and infant daughter, became residents in the castle of Farnham, and it was to no other than the Thane himself that Henry of Blois determined on entrusting the safety of his stronghold.

Our story will now dispense with all further particular reference to Henry of Blois, and go on to narrate only such incidents as pertain to its own development.

Thane Englebert and his lady had been married for twenty long years without offspring, and the time had nearly arrived when, according to the order of nature, none might be expected; about this time, according to the custom of those rude days in which they lived, both husband and wife determined to offer up their joint prayers to the Giver of all good, holding forth, as a sort of bribe to the Almighty, a promise or vow to dedicate such gift as might be vouchsafed them, to the service of heaven itself. In other words, they prayed for a child, and whether male or female, solemnly swore to make the desired child either monk or nun, as the case might be.

Curiously enough their prayer was heard, or at least their wish was granted, for in due course of time there was born to them a lovely female child, which was baptized in the name of Hilda, after the Thane's own

mother, and grew up, to the age of ten years, a perfect prodigy of loveliness, virtue, and good temper.

It was about this time, or indeed seven years after the period of Englebert's domiciliation in Farnham Castle, that a marked change came over the disposition of little Hilda—and here, it must be observed, that "governesses" being scarce in those days, the education of pretty Miss Englebert had been most carefully—left alone by her mother, and would have been left alone entirely but for the kind interposition of a sort of chaplain, or resident priest, whom the prince-bishop thought an indispensable adjunct to the reasonably small chapel which his position rendered necessary as a portion of his residence.

This chaplain, or priest, had heard of the vow made by Hilda's parents, and judging that a young lady dedicated to the service of God ought to be able to read her breviary, not only took upon himself, without call, to instruct the young lady in the rudiments of Latin, but also lost no opportunity of informing her that she was predestined to celibacy, and must then and for ever consider herself as bound to carry out the intention of her parents, as vowed before her birth.

In accordance with the instructions of her tutor, the little Hilda evinced every disposition to become a nun—she threw aside all childish games and notions, became, all at once, a staid, demure little creature, and insisted,

like Mr. Wilkie Collins's famous heroine, upon wearing nothing but WHITE.

If mamma Englebert, in the pride of her heart, presented the little lady with a beautiful pink frock, trimmed with silver or gold lace, and even took the trouble of arraying her in it, the little minx would go straightway up into the nursery, disrobe herself of the obnoxious garment, and in lieu thereof display, outwardly, a portion of white attire which need not be otherwise mentioned than as intended to be worn inwardly next her skin.

She also, about this time, evinced a most remarkable amount of self-will, verging, we are afraid, upon obstinacy ; and although she failed not in love or obedience to her parents, whom she loved most tenderly, it was yet apparent that whenever and wherever she had made up her mind to any one matter, she pertinaciously clung to her opinion, and would never suffer herself to be moved by any argument. Her "yes" was yes, and her "no" was no ; "*dictum et factum*," was the elegant eulogium passed by her priest-tutor upon this said quality of mind, which seemed to meet his approval, and upon this principle will be found to turn those after events of her life which have made her name remarkable.

And now, before going further, it is the chronicler's sad task to record a melancholy instance of bad faith on the part of Miss Hilda's parents. When Englebert and his lady wife made their joint vow to heaven, it was their

intention to have kept that vow, and indeed very rare are the instances wherein such vows were ever broken—the church almost invariably visiting such defaulters with the severest penalties known to its law; but nevertheless such vows were occasionally broken—sometimes by individuals of high station and great wealth, their delinquency being covered by ample donations to the church, and occasionally by individuals of lesser note simply by virtue of their insignificance and poverty. But Thane Englebert was neither very insignificant nor very poor, two facts which greatly aggravated his crime in the eyes of the one solitary priest who formed the "staff" of Bishop Henry's ecclesiastic establishment at Farnham Castle.

Nevertheless, and despite all possible contingencies, Englebert, his lady wife, and their little lady daughter, contrived to pass six inharmonious years without arriving at any climax. The little lady rigorously conformed to all the usances of ceremonial laid down to her by her spiritual adviser—she *would* dress in white, she *would* fast and pray, it was even said that she flagellated her own snowy shoulders once with a knotted flaxen cord, in humble imitation of her preceptor, whose back and shoulders were declared, *by himself*, to be one mass of weals and blotches, an assumed fact, the truth of which is wanting.

During this time the Thane himself, but slightly pricked in conscience, and having become sadly inat-

tentive to his religious duties, took pains to find a becoming husband for his daughter, now approaching the marriageable age of sixteen years. His choice fell upon a stalwart Breton Knight, of good extraction, and some martial fame; but one totally in want of those personal attractions which go far towards winning the female heart. His name was Bras-de-fer, and a much uglier fellow, or a more uncourtly soldier, never donned morion or couched a lance.

He was, however, high in favour with the bishop, then as usual away in France, and was greatly enamoured with the beauty of Miss Hilda herself, whose visible loathing of his company served but as a whet to the appetite of his unholy love.

The matter of a marriage between Bras-de-fer and Miss Hilda having been satisfactorily arranged and decided on by three out of the four personages most concerned, it was determined that scant ceremony should be used in compelling our young heroine to fulfil the wishes of her parents; but herein they did not calculate upon the force of WILL which they had to encounter in the disposition of the young lady in question; who, on being told that she must marry Bras-de-fer, replied by stamping her pretty foot violently upon the ground, and uttering the monosyllable "NO, NO, NO," in a manner so decisive, that there could be no possible doubt about the fact, and that the "no" she said was the "no" she meant, unequivocally as well as irrevocably.

Long and stormy were the debates which ensued between parents and child ; little Hilda, now grown up beyond the stature, and past the age of being treated as a mere child, though yielding perfect obedience to her parents in all other than the one command which would have had her break the vow made at her birth, yet showed herself so immovably resolute upon this occasion, that it was deemed expedient by the Thane and his lady to have recourse to some strong measure, in order to force that obedience which they found themselves unable to obtain by the weak agency of mere words.

Accordingly, after tasking their wits to the utmost, they at length arrived at a determination to imprison their daughter in a remote chamber of the castle, and *starve* her into compliance with their wish ; a determination which was no sooner arrived at than communicated to the young lady herself.

Here was an unpleasant predicament for a young virgin of sixteen, whose one single crime was an aversion to matrimony !

Faithful to her principles, and to her convictions, Miss Hilda determined to endure every privation rather than violate her own mental vow ; and equally determined to maintain their own resolutions were the Thane and his lady. Consequently the very next day saw our young heroine closely imprisoned in the highest chamber of Farnham Castle—most probably that of the old keep, which then numbered some four stories, and which was

an apartment of very scanty accommodation, seeing that it contained absolutely no furniture whatsoever excepting a few rushes strewed upon its floor, an apology for a bed, and one rough three-legged stool, minus even the decency of a covering.

In common with all such structures, the chamber in which our heroine was imprisoned, had a loophole on each side of its doorway, and it was, therefore, easy enough for persons stationed outside to observe all that might transpire within. This being the case, Thane Englebert and his lady wife stationed themselves upon the stone staircase, at much personal inconvenience, in the hope of seeing their child succumb to the powerful argument they were endeavouring to maintain; but in this they were signally disappointed, for no sooner did the pangs of hunger begin to manifest themselves, than Miss Hilda, already on her knees, in prayer to heaven, beheld three beautiful turtle doves perched up on the stone lattice which did duty for a window—bearing in their beaks a sufficient quantity of beautiful ripe cherries and fresh plucked strawberries, to form a most delicious meal, the like of which, for luxurious enjoyment, had never before touched mortal lips. On the evening of that same day, three more birds of the same tribe, equally well laden, made their appearance, followed by three linnets, who carolled an evening song, for her delectation, more beautiful and musical than anything she had before heard, lulling her to sleep in an ecstasy of delight that resulted in dreams of heaven itself.

On the day following, the same miracle arrived, giving Thane Englebert and his lady wife fully to understand that a Power superior to their own ruled over the destinies of their child. But half credulous, the strongly minded pair decided on yet another mode of annoyance to their fair child. They determined on stripping her of all garments, leaving her a prey to all the winds of the earth, which just then blew hurricanes enough to melt the heart of a poor-law guardian (not that poor-law guardians were then invented, although we have reason to believe that such monstrosities followed rapidly on the invention of gunpowder) : no sooner was this thought decided on, than it was put into practice ; the Thane's lady, herself, stripping from her child's body every vestige of raiment, leaving the fair maiden to conceal her condition, as best she might, amidst the rushes of her miserable bed.

But no sooner had the mother left her child, to hold confab with the male partner of her iniquity, who, despite his reasonably warm leather jerkin and overcoat of sheep-skin, sat shivering upon the stone staircase, than some half-a-dozen magpies were seen making their way through the air, carrying between them a tapestried garment of the richest possible material, beautiful to look upon, and luxurious to wear, being lined with the finest of wool, and bearing on its exterior side a golden threaded pattern worthy of royalty itself. This garment, the pied chatterboxes, who had doubtless stolen it from the wardrobe of a princess, lost no

time in thrusting in between the bars of the windows, by means of their united strength and ingenuity ; talking all the time, after their own peculiar way, in evident enjoyment of the having done a good action—as indeed they had.

When the Thane and his lady observed this new manifestation of a Power superior to their own, they well-nigh went frantic with rage and disappointment, but not yet acknowledging the full force of that Invisible Power, which was in very truth the Power of heaven, they decided on yet one other combat with fate, and in accordance with this determination went, both of them, into the tower chamber of their child, and removing from under her the entire mass of rushes, forming her bed, left the unfortunate Hilda to take what repose she might upon the bare and damp stone flooring of her desolate chamber.

But herein, once more, and for the last time, they were disappointed ; for no sooner had they left the apartment than, late as it was, at eventide, whole legions of small birds, consisting of sparrows, linnets, robin red-breasts, and fieldfares, made their way through the window casement, each bearing in its beak a particle of feathery moss, soft as eider-down, and fragrant as the breath of flowers, which, being deposited on the stone floor in thousands upon thousands of tiny layers, quickly assumed the appearance of a couch more luxuriant than had ever before been known, and one which

afforded the awe-stricken maiden not only a delightful night's repose, but also a clear conviction that Heaven itself approved of the course she was taking, and would continue to support her under whatever trials and temptation might in future beset her.

After this third evidence of their incapacity to bring their daughter into their own way of thinking, the Thane and his lady gave up all further attempts—at least for the time being, and, at once liberating our heroine from her confinement, suffered her to take again her place in the household; to hear the exhortations of their chaplain, and to wear whatever she pleased, even her own favourite white, and beyond this, counselled their protege *Bras-de-fer*, to restrain his attentions within becoming bounds, on pain of being utterly discarded.

For a time, all things went well with Miss Hilda; she progressed wonderfully in her studies,—learned her "*Propria quæ maribus*," we beg pardon, and her "*ave maria*," and "*pater noster*," with extreme avidity; was soon able to copy and transcribe some of the characters in an illuminated missal,—and had even begun to learn some of the routine exercises necessary to qualify her for a novitiate, when her cruel parents, bent upon once more testing her faith, and promoting their own base ends, devised a scheme so utterly revolting and wickedly impious, that the pen of a chronicler is reluctant, even in the extreme, to record its unnatural development.

Determined to test their daughter's faith to the very uttermost stretch, the Thane and his wife hit upon the following experiment. They caused the chapel of Farnham Castle to be decked out in fashion for a bridal, its altar to be festooned with flowers, its walls to be hung with tapestry, borrowed from the Bishop's own "Sanctum sanctorum," its pavement to be strewn with rushes, and even went so far as to make a new embroidered petticoat, for an image of the virgin, out of one of her ladyship's old robes, in order to render the scene impressive ; which done, and all matters being duly prepared, they caused their daughter to be brought as far as the altar rails, where, to her astonishment and dismay, she found Bras-de-fer, arrayed in all his finery, a priest who was utterly unknown to her, and her father the Thane, together with her mother, both decked out in their holiday suits, as for an occasion of importance.

Startled by surprise, and overcome by presentiment, she held back from approaching the sacred fane, but was speedily prevented from retreating, by the advance of both parents, who, after forcibly leading her to the altar, at once made known to her that unless she immediately, both there and then, suffered herself to be united in the bonds of matrimony to Bras-de-fer (whose natural ugliness appeared to ten-fold disadvantage in his bridegroom's attire) they, her parents, would, before her very eyes, plunge two daggers into their own hearts, and

leave her an orphan, at the mercy of all the world; in evidence of which, and in support of which most outrageous declaration, the pair displayed a couple of highly polished poignards, of Italian workmanship, both long enough and sharp enough to carry out the somewhat bombastic threats of those who held them.

Bewildered with the suddenness of her misfortune, staggered by the threat of her parents, and utterly at a loss to find any way out of her difficulties, poor Hilda threw herself upon her knees, and lifted up her eyes to Heaven more in agony than in prayer, and more in desolation than either—she wept, groaned, cried, but all in vain; she uprose from her kneeling position, threw herself at the feet of her parents, petitioned, prayed, nay, almost raved herself into fits with agony of intercession, but all uselessly—the Thane was immovable; her mother, without one tinge of compassion, and her would-be lover, without one spark of manly generosity in his wicked looking eyes. She saw, too, the bright blades of the two daggers which her parents somewhat ostentatiously displayed in their *left* hands (the Thane, be it remembered, had lost his *right* arm), and her tender nature shrunk from the horrible possibility which might follow the course of action that her own heart dictated in accordance with its already recorded vow.

Where was her friend and instructor, the priest? why was another, and a stranger at the altar where he

so long had ministered? The thought instantly arrested her mind, and saved her from utter prostration; with a bound she started up, with a glance of her eye she searched surrounding space, and with the quickness of lightning she detected high over head, but almost entirely concealed by the tracing of a small window, the face of her friend and instructor; that he had been forcibly kept away was evident, and that he had broken from his durance was more than probable; with a cry of joy she besought him to descend, but a gesture on his part at once told the impossibility of so doing, and imposed silence on herself. She accepted both, for the gesture was that of a hand pointing to Heaven, and the injunction of silence was in accordance with her own heart.

Silently, therefore, and in an attitude of passive faith, did Hilda withdraw herself from the feet of her parents, and standing up boldly, yet meekly, await the further course of events.

Mistaking her passiveness for resignation, the priest commenced the marriage service, and had proceeded so far as to put the usual question authorized by the ritual—which question, answered in the affirmative by Bras-de-fer, was next in rotation put to our heroine, with the full expectation of being likewise answered in the affirmative, when silence ensued. “Wilt thou take this man for thy wedded husband?” thundered forth the priest. But yet no answer.

Hereupon the Thane and his lady both raised their daggers in an attitude suitable for striking. The priest for the third time, gave utterance to the words, "Wilt thou take this man for thy wedded husband?" Poor Hilda lifted up her eyes, she saw her parents with determined faces and determined hands, ready, as she firmly believed, to immolate themselves, and nature almost conquered; but again she turned her glance towards the spot where even yet appeared the face of her spiritual friend, and a somewhat in his look, an expression of hope, faith, and reliance, united in one, served to fill her heart with a holy trust that would not be swayed by any earthly consideration.

For the fourth and last time, the priest thundered out those awful words which were destined to form the crisis of her fate. "Wilt thou take this man for thy wedded husband?" A pause of few instants only now ensued, when with a voice choked by emotion, but yet sufficiently distinct to be plainly heard, Hilda spoke the fatal monosyllable, "No!"

A wild shriek followed—or a horrible yell, rather. Our heroine clasped her hands over her face, she felt as if turning to stone, but expressions of amazement being uttered in the voices of her parents—whom she supposed to be dead—caused a revulsion of feeling under which she became instantly aware that a catastrophe had ensued of a nature differing from what might have been anticipated. And so there had. For lo! on the utterance

of that fatal monosyllable which was to have become the death-warrant of the Thane and his wife, a miracle had ensued, for the two daggers which were directed towards the hearts of Englebert and his lady, flew suddenly and by their own accord, away from the breasts intended, and plunged themselves simultaneously in the heart of Bras-de-fer, who fell dead, with a yell of anguish ; and so ended the troubles of his intended wife.

It need hardly now be told, that with such manifestations of the will of Heaven before their eyes, Hilda's parents no longer opposed her wish to become dedicated to the service of God. They forthwith reconciled them to the thought, and even favoured it after their own peculiar fashion, by giving their child the control of all their worldly possessions to dispose of in charity.

It needs now only to be told that Thane Englebert and his lady, dying very shortly after these events, left Hilda at liberty to do exactly as she pleased, and this is what she pleased to do. Not altogether choosing the restraint of a convent, and being possessed of some original ideas of her own, she caused a substantial house or tower to be erected on a spot chosen by herself, and within about a mile of Farnham Castle, in the parish of "Hale," where she led the life of a kind of a female hermit, living entirely by herself, dressing entirely in white, passing her time in prayer and deeds of charity, whereby she became a sort of saint on earth, worshipped by all the poor of the locality, and respected by all the rich, even

by those thorough scoundrels, the "knights of old," who, when they passed by the "Ladye-House," as her domicile was called, bowed low their plumed heads, and dipped their lance's pennon, in all reverence for a virtue that was as much beyond their understanding as it was above their reach.

It is not recorded when, or under what circumstances, this estimable lady died, but the odour of her good works lives after her, and if she was not actually canonized, all we can say is, that she *ought* so to have been—and thus concludes our legend.

"GENTLEMAN JOHN:" A MYSTERY OF THE CAMP.

CHAPTER I.

"There is no curb for passion like a STRONG WILL."

REV. DR. COLLYER.

DURING the spring of the year 1859, when the gallant "201st" were quartered in the North Camp, Aldershot, a sergeant, whom we will call by the convenient name of "Smith," was sauntering leisurely down towards the south camp, and had already crossed over the pontoon bridge, when his attention was called, by a comrade, to the uncommonly fine, indeed *noble* proportions of a young man who walked a little in advance.

The object of their attention stood over six feet high, his shoulders were uncommonly broad, his waist—for a male—particularly small, and the muscles of his legs plainly visible through their loosely-fitting encasements,—his whole figure denoting strength and activity beyond the usual average.

The dress of this young man was singular in the highest degree, being of the material and colour generally known as "workhouse grey," whilst its make was

on a quality with its material, being such as would have made a less striking figure look commonplace and ungainly.

“A splendid mark for a rifle-ball,” suggested Sergeant Smith to his comrade (a Corporal of the military train).

“Aye ; I wonder if his face will bear inspection as well as his back,” replied the Corporal.

Just at that moment the young man turned his head, for one instant only—but that one instant was sufficient for his two admirers to pronounce it fully equal to their expectations, being of that rare stamp which impresses itself indelibly on the mind, like the beauty of an Antinous, or the severity of an Apollo—that of the stranger seeming to unite the graces of those two immortal personages in one.

After a few words of comment, Sergeant Smith and his acquaintance parted company, the latter to his duties, and the former towards the town of Aldershot, whither also the stranger youth preceded him.

It was about half-past five o'clock, and the retreat had sounded twenty minutes before, so that, according to custom in all garrison towns, there was a strong muster of men hurrying towards the various places of amusement which abound in the principal thoroughfares ; our Sergeant himself, being of the number so inclined, and hesitating only as to which place of recreation he should direct his steps.

Whilst in the act of reading a printed placard in one of the shop windows, announcing the "benefit" of some noted "professional," Sergeant Smith was politely accosted by the stranger he had so greatly admired, and asked if he could spare time for a few moments' conversation.

Somewhat astonished, but not at all displeased, the Sergeant replied in the affirmative, adding, that it would be best to "turn in somewhere," to which the stranger acceded; and the pair speedily found themselves "vis-a-vis" in the snug parlour of a well-known beer house, called the "Irish Harp."

After asking the Sergeant what he would take, the stranger called for some bottled stout, and proceeded to question his companion touching certain particulars, as will be shown in the following conversation.

"You are a Corporal, I believe, in the Line?"

"SERGEANT, if you please, young gentleman. Do you not perceive my three stripes, and sash?"

"Ah! Does that denote a Sergeant?"

"I thought all the world knew that; you can have seen or heard very little of military life, or you would have known better; but no offence, no offence."

"None has been intended, I assure you; pardon my ignorance, which would fain be enlightened. I wish to know something of military life, and it is therefore I have accosted you. May I be so bold as to ask who is the most severe commanding officer in this Camp?"

“A strange question, young gentleman, very strange. Allow me to reply by demanding why you ask, for it is a little out of order for men like myself to canvass the quality of our superiors, especially amongst strangers.”

“Oh! I did not think of that. You suppose I may be drawing you into an improper admission, may be, but, if so, you are wrong.”

“And I may have my reasons for what I tell, or don’t tell.”

“That is true also. It is clear, therefore, that I have offended you unwittingly. Pray accept my apologies, and I—I—I—will seek my information elsewhere; so good evening, Sergeant.”

Thus saying, the young gentleman rose to depart, but Sergeant Smith, feeling that he had expressed himself harshly, checked the young man’s departure, by resuming the conversation, as follows:—

“Not so fast, friend, you mistake me, as I, possibly, have mistaken you—listen. We, of Her Majesty’s army, are a class of men bound to speak only with the utmost respect of our officers, whatever our private opinions may be; to name any one of them as a severe man, *might* be construed into disrespect, were any listener to tell tales, but as we are alone, and as you appear to be unversed in such matters, I will answer your questions to the best of my ability, so say on.”

“Enough, and thank you; please, then, to answer

my first question by telling who is the severest commanding officer in this camp—north or south? The camp you belong to, whichever that may be, who is the greatest martinet—for that is the word, I believe, in use."

"Martinet! aye, that is a word we all understand well enough; and perhaps I know exactly the man too."

"Is it your own commander?"

"Perhaps it is."

"Nay tell me—*is it?*"

"Well, then, it is, and it is not."

"Explain your paradox."

"Here goes, then. Our regimental Colonel, that is to say, Lieut.-Colonel Jones, who is now absent on urgent private affairs, is by no means what you call a martinet, quite otherwise, being as kind-hearted a gentleman as ever breathed, and rather a lax disciplinarian; but Brevet-Colonel Robinson, who commands the regiment, and is only Major by right, is a thorough-going martinet, or worse—for he is not merely a strict disciplinarian, but has the devil's own temper; forever holding a court-martial on some unlucky non.-com., or sending his men to the cells for a trifle that the Colonel would wink his eye at."

"Indeed! and the common soldiers hate him, of course?"

"Hold hard, friend. Common soldiers! common soldiers! Who may they be, friend?"

"Why, the men, of course. I mean those who are not like yourself, Sergeant."

“ See there now—how you civilian folks would degrade us military—private soldiers you mean, or privates, which you please—only don’t call them common.”

“ I beg pardon. But tell me how and in what way is Major Robinson severe? Supposing a com—I mean a private soldier—were to disobey orders, what would he do? ”

“ No one ever dreams of such a thing as disobeying orders—if our Major were to command any of our men to ‘ *swallow his grandmother,* ’ he would have to do it, and no mistake.”

“ Bless my soul, how very ridiculous! But suppose the man had no grandmother, what then? ”

“ He would have to swallow her just the same, for all that, if the Major commanded it, or—”

“ Or what? ”

“ If he refused, for the first offence he would have the guard-house—for the second, cells—for the third, the cat.”

“ That will do—I’ll enlist under him, if you think he would take me into the regiment? ”

“ *If* he would take you in—catch him refusing a man of your inches. But you are joking, youngster? ”

“ Not I, on my soul; I am as much in earnest as ever I was in all my life. So please intercede for me.”

“ It will require small intercession if you really mean what you say; but excuse me, young gentleman, I have served Her Majesty nigh twenty years, man and boy—

I have also known many worthy lads, such as yourself, for instance, who have quarrelled with their homes, their fathers and mothers, who have enlisted in a moment of disappointment, but who have repented long before they had learnt the ‘goose-step,’ and then moved heaven and earth to get bought out. Have I hit the right nail on the head, eh ? ”

“ Partly so—but partly not so. I thank you, Sergeant, for your good-nature, but you mistake your man. My mind is made up, and if I join your regiment, no living being will ever see me flinch.”

“ Not from the enemy, I’ll be sworn, but from the rough-and-tumble drudgery of the barrack-room—the service generally ? ”

“ From nothing, Sergeant. Never again whilst I breathe the breath of life ” (*and here the young man threw a degree of earnest solemnity into his voice and manner which startled his listener*),—“ never, never again will I suffer my impetuosity of temper to be surprised or forced into collision with any other human being.”

“ You seem excited now—but—”

“ Am I ? it shall be for the last time. Hark ye, Sergeant, nature has given me strong passions, which it is my desire to have curbed. Take me into your regiment, I would serve under orders, the more severe the better, the most harsh the best.”

“ Then Major Robinson is the man for you ; but take my advice yet, sleep on it, take the night to consider in.

If by to-morrow you are in the same mood, come to me, Sergeant Smith, No. 2 Company, 201st Regiment, North Camp. But I must go now ; can you tell me the exact time ? ”

Hereupon the young gentleman drew forth a valuable-looking gold watch, at the same instant displaying a superb diamond ring upon the little finger of his right hand, such as none but a rich man could honestly possess ; the hand itself being small and white, almost like that of a woman. After declaring the time to be half past six, the Sergeant took his departure for some place of amusement, and the stranger gentleman for his hotel ; each occupied with his several thoughts.

CHAPTER II.

ON the morning following, it was with mixed feelings of pleasure and surprise, not altogether unmingled with pain, that Sergeant Smith saw his friend of the evening previous present himself as a recruit.

After once more cautioning his young friend against precipitancy on finding his mood unchanged, the Sergeant complied with the request made to him ; and all preliminaries of inspection, including that of the medical department, being satisfactorily passed through, the young man was duly enrolled as “ Private John Humble, of Her Majesty’s 201st Regiment,” in receipt of a mag-

nificent income amounting to thirteen pence per diem, exclusive of deductions for "kit"—daily rations, extra clothing, barrack damages, &c. &c. &c. The balance whereof, in support of contingencies, may be set down at somewhere about three-pence half-penny.

It shall not be said that we have any unpatriotic intention of "showing up" the life of a soldier by entering upon the unsavoury details of barrack-room conversations, and of the little pleasantries attendant upon sleeping sixteen or eighteen persons within the space that common-sense would have allotted to three or four only; nor is it worth while to record the rough and senseless custom of practical joking which always seeks its victim in a new-comer, in spite of all the restraint exercised, or supposed to be exercised, by a non-commissioned officer, appointed for that purpose. Private John Humble passed through all these unscathed, indeed he scarcely seemed to be conscious of their existence, but went through his daily routine of rising at gun-fire, issuing from a warm atmosphere across the chilly road into a cold "ablution" hut, where he "soused" himself in water, rubbed himself on a towel coarse as a rasp—recrossed into his sleeping room, there to dress for early drill; after an un-luxurious breakfast to examine his arms, accoutrements, &c. &c., then to parade; after which, to route marching or field-day evolutions, as the case might be, and to return to clean arms, dress, &c. &c., to take turn to guard, or picket service, to acquire the knowledge necessary for

his daily drill, to recognize certain little mysteries known only to the initiated, to answer the names, roll-calls, and, finally, to yield implicit obedience, without a look, a word, or a thought of question, to all and every command dictated by his superior in grade.

All of this, Private Humble endured, aye, cheerfully, never once giving cause for the slightest reprimand; he learnt all he had to learn almost intuitively, he never forgot anything once told him, and cheerfully, almost lovingly, performed any laborious or disagreeable work, such as scrubbing tables, washing floors, carrying coals, &c., which could be apportioned to him or even thrust on him through the laziness of others; in short Private Humble was the "heavy labourer" of his mess, and would have been a prime favourite among his comrades, but that he ignored their foul language, their blasphemous expressions, and certain of their repulsive manners, even to loathing.

Sergeant Smith, the only man whose conversation he might be said to seek; observed, or fancied he observed, "many a time and oft" that Private Humble's face would flush up for a moment or two on receiving some imperative command of a trivial nature, and would afterwards become of a death-like white, as though a mental revolt had been conquered by a still stronger mental effort, or possibly by shame at its own weakness, and yet instead of avoiding all such positions as involved a possibility of caution, Private Humble positively

courted them ; seemed to thrust himself forward into the very jaws of difficulty as if to afford himself the greatest possible chance of being humiliated, and seemingly undergoing the punishment of self degradation with a positive relish.

As a matter of course these peculiarities in a private soldier gave occasion for remark, and at length reached the ears of Captain Dash, commanding the company, who, with the kind intention of lessening the burden of his young recruit, one day called him aside, and offered him the grade of Lance Corporal, merely, as he observed, that his hands might be saved from those contaminating offices which were so opposed to cleanliness. But Private Humble, to the astonishment of his officer, finally, but thankfully refused, saying, "he had made up his mind to undergo all the hardness of a soldier's lot, and did not even intend to seek those immunities which a superior rank would give him." But at the same time he took the liberty of asking one favour ; it was that Captain Dash would take charge of his watch and ring—value beyond one hundred pounds, as the possession of such articles exposed himself to robbery, and his comrades to temptation.

With a look of deep wonder, and his own secret thoughts thereon, Captain Dash accepted Private Humble's trust, and feeling that a scrutiny into the young man's motives would be the reverse of delicate, dismissed him, with something very like an unintentional bow.

So far, the life of Private Humble had passed on without bringing itself into collision with Major,—we beg pardon, with Brevet-Colonel Robinson, who, strict as he was, in matters of discipline, usually made his complaints known through the adjutant, and not by word of mouth; but a very slight occasion gave rise to an infraction of his habitual rule.

Private John Humble happened, one night, to be on guard opposite the hut in which Brevet-Colonel Robinson was quartered, and, as usual, marched to and fro over a well worn beat, after the manner of all his predecessors in that eligible department, a complete channel having been formed by the hourly, daily, weekly, and yearly passage of one single pair of feet, till it was as distinctly marked as the bed of a small stream, and to stray from which was almost difficult. It was about eleven o'clock at night, the moon was at its full, and the sky nearly as bright as day. Brevet-Colonel Robinson had just left the mess-room and walked with that elasticity of step which denotes the attempt of a well-bred gentleman to disguise from himself the possible fact of his having taken a little too much wine. To hint that he was intoxicated would be unjust, he might have been slightly elevated, or the sudden change from a warm to a cold atmosphere might have had its effect; but certainly, the Brevet-Colonel's walk was slightly out of the line termed by Euclid "a right line," and demonstrated as being the most direct course from one given

point to another; for it serpentine and swayed, gracefully, of course, and far more after the fashion of Hogarth's "line of beauty," than after that before alluded to.

On approaching Private Humble, Brevet-Colonel Robinson addressed him in a loud voice, asking why he did not keep precisely to his own line of beat, instead of winding about in that unsoldierly way. To which Private Humble, after presenting arms, and not knowing how to reply without offence, first ventured on a "salute," and then marched on his beat as if nothing had occurred.

"Guard, Guard," roared out Brevet-Colonel Robinson, and in a trice, up came a Sergeant's guard, who were immediately commanded to place Private Humble under arrest.

"On what charge, Colonel," demanded the Sergeant.

"Disobedience of orders," roared Brevet-Colonel Robinson; after which he stalked on to his quarters, and Private Humble was marched off, "in charge" to the guard room, somewhat unexpectedly enlightened as to the species of discipline sometimes indulged in by officers of the strict school.

On the following day, Brevet-Colonel Robinson, whilst examining the charge sheet, was positively oblivious of the particular charge laid against Private Humble, but not choosing to admit as much before his brother officers, ordered Private Humble to be dismissed with a reprimand; he was therefore "reprimanded and

dismissed accordingly," and was about to return to his duty when the Captain of his company, the same who had kindly taken charge of his gold watch and diamond ring, whispered a few words, and Brevet-Colonel Robinson turned sharply upon John Humble, saying:—

"So you are a fine gentleman in disguise, eh?" To which the young man replied, "I am Private John Humble, and nothing more, Colonel."

"Humph," rejoined Brevet-Colonel Robinson. "That is all you choose to tell, but I'll find you out, and if I detect you for a scoundrel"—

"Scoundrel!" retorted Private Humble, his face and forehead being in a moment of the deepest scarlet, "Scoundrel!"

But before another word could be uttered, Private Humble had fallen down in a fit, and was carried out of the guard-room, insensible.

CHAPTER III.

ON returning to consciousness, Private John Humble's first question to the friendly comrade who ministered to his recovery, was, "Did I strike him," to which the man replied, "Strike him! who, the Colonel?—certainly not, certainly not." "Thank God for that," vehemently exclaimed Private Humble; "then I have conquered myself at last," with which comfortable

reflection he passed out to his regular duties with a firm step, and proud eye; no remains of his sudden indisposition being visible to the puzzled gaze of his comrades. Soon after this little incident, one of the subaltern officers of the 201st announced his intention of exchanging with a gentleman from some other regiment which was ordered abroad, from a desire to see more active service; and very shortly the desired change became effected. It should here be observed, that with the sole exception of Brevet-Colonel Robinson, there was not an officer of Her Majesty's 201st regiment who was not popular with his own men in particular, and with the regiment in general, all of them being gentlemen, not merely by birth, but by education, as well as by circumstances. It had never been said of them, that they incurred debt beyond their means to liquidate, that they annoyed each other, or scandalized propriety by becoming the theme of public exposure; they neither gambled nor drank, nor committed any of those eccentricities which have made other regiments better known than respected, such as "The——Shabbies," "The——Incurables," &c., &c., but will ever be remembered in the vicinity of Aldershot, as the most exemplary that ever entered its camp, with the one solitary exception of its commanding officer "pro tem."

The gentleman who supplied the vacancy created by the retirement of Ensign——was announced to the company of Captain Dash as Mr Tremain, and when

that name was heard for the first time by Private John Humble, it was noticed that he gave a sudden start, and was, for a considerable period afterwards, lost in meditation. What could the new comer be to him? was the question amongst his comrades; and it was decided to watch him on parade, when the new officer should make his first appearance. This was accordingly done, especially by Sergeant Smith, to whom the incident had been reported.

On the day following, this occasion occurred—Mr. Tremain took up his position in the company, and although Private Humble had no means at command for disguising his general appearance, it was noted that the expression of his countenance was somewhat different from usual, seeming more stern, more pale, and with the jaw more firmly set. Mr. Tremain passed through the ranks, before the ranks, and behind the ranks, but not a hint of any kind betrayed any sort of recognition either to him or to Humble, and when after several passings and repassings, the officer in question took his departure with the rest, an appearance of manifest relief took the place of deep anxiety in the aspect of Private Humble; but for all this, a notable change still took place in his demeanour; inasmuch as he quite suddenly ceased to display certain accomplishments which had almost, in spite of himself, previously begun to make him talked about. It had been ascertained, by the Major's lady, that Private Humble was an accomplished

pianist ; by his Captain that he was an able mathematician ; by the Chaplain that he was a ripe Greek scholar, and by the bandmaster that he was a far more learned contrapuntist than himself ; all of which distinguishing peculiarities the young soldier now kept in positive abeyance, and would have utterly concealed, but that the mischief of their publicity was already made evident.

The singularity of Private Humble's connection with the regiment had long acquired for its hero the soubriquet of “ Gentleman John,” and was a common theme of conversation, not only with the company to which he was attached, but throughout the regiment itself. His actions were watched ; the desire to know who he really was, and why he entered upon such a career, became stronger and stronger every day ; but the mystery of his incognito remained intact.

It became known that he received one single letter only, every week, and that always on the Monday afternoon, the said letter awaiting his presence at the Camp Post Office, and never being delivered to him through the ordinary channel ; it was surmised, and justly so, that the said letter was addressed in a name different from that he bore in the regiment, but all the ingenuity of his comrades failed to detect its address, and it only remained for them to note that its receipt invariably brought with it an accession of melancholy to the usually quiet countenance of the mysterious young man.

It was now the period at which route marching ceased, and the routine of field duties began throughout all the departments of the camp, when the time approached for the solving of this mystery.

On Monday evening at the officers' mess, the last before Easter, and only when the dinner was ended and dessert was on the table, a conversation ensued upon the subject of insanity, given rise to by some incidental circumstance. Now the particular subject of insanity was not one especially suited to the mess table, but nevertheless, having been once broached, continued to arrest attention, when Mr. Tremain observed that he had only that very day received a letter wherein it was stated that an old and valued friend had suddenly recovered, in a very remarkable way, from a terrible visitation of that kind. He was, of course, asked to relate the circumstance, which he did, in something like the following strain.

Sir Arthur Pendragon, a wealthy Cornish Baronet, having two motherless children, one son, and one daughter, conceived a dislike to the routine of an English University for his son, and chose to have his education conducted at the great and deservedly celebrated Marischal College, Aberdeen, under very strict superintendence, for reasons of his own. These reasons being that the lad possessed so violent a disposition as to require an uncommon degree of curb.

Young Pendragon was therefore placed under the

charge of the Rev. Dr. Anderson, one of the Baronet's oldest friends, and was also, in some other sort, committed to the medical superintendence of a physician equally well known and respected. After passing through the curriculum of that celebrated University, with the highest honour to himself, and without once visiting his paternal home through four long years, young Pendragon returned to his father and sister, a prodigy of manly beauty and intellectual refinement.

The advices which Sir Arthur Pendragon received, at various times, from his two old friends in Scotland, were apparently satisfactory, but it soon became evident that the great difference between the state of society in the cold northern city of Aberdeen, and the more hot-blooded intercourse of the London world (for it was to London the young man came, where his family was on a visit), was beginning to act upon his son's constitutional temperament.

Accomplished, generous, and habitually courteous in all the relations of life, young Pendragon was yet incapable of bearing contradiction, and would have embroiled himself in many a duel if that wretched institution of a by-gone age had been in vogue. As it was the Baronet withdrew himself and family to their native county of Cornwall with all expedition, hoping to work a favourable change in his son's habits by patient exposition, and in some measure through the affectionate

love of his kind and gentle sister, of whom young Pendragon was passionately fond.

In the quiet round of domestic happiness all went well with the young man for several weeks. Female society, of the most attractive aspect, was provided, in the presence of which, habits of self-control were imperative, but the restraints thereby entailed were chiefly exercised over his in-door life, and seemed to extend no further than the threshold of the family mansion; for elsewhere than in the actual presence of his sister's coterie, the ungovernable temper of his nature burst forth with redoubled violence, and was only brought to a climax through the perpetration of a fearful act, which occurred thus:—

Sir Arthur Pendragon and his son had occasion to accompany their timber bailiff beyond the precincts of the park in order to select certain trees for felling, when a slight difference of opinion took place between father and son; little things proverbially lead to greater, and so was it in the present case. The Baronet waxed warm, his son still warmer; the timber bailiff endeavoured to stand between the two, but with the usual mischance of peace-makers; for he only made matters worse; at length, in an evil moment of ungovernable fury, young Pendragon felled his parent to the earth, bleeding, insensible, and to all appearance dead.

No sooner was the unpardonable act done, than the young man, appalled, and conscience stricken, would have given his right hand to have undone that wicked blow, but repentance came too late.

By the united aid of the timber bailiff and several peasants, the unfortunate Baronet was carried to his home, there to remain a raving lunatic for many months, in spite of the most scientific medical advice, or the most affectionate care of his tender daughter, and now thoroughly repentant, and remorse-stricken son.

The lapse of a few months rendered the services of two keepers from a celebrated asylum indispensable, and it was then that young Pendragon, with the full force of his crime hanging over his conscience, formed some secret determination which resulted in his leaving his home, secretly, silently, without leaving any clue to his whereabouts, even with his beloved sister.

Here—one universal look of recognition seemed to affect all but the speaker himself. Each gentleman regarded his neighbour inquiringly, and Captain Dash, in three brief words, spoke the opinion of all, “Private John Humble;” and Private John Humble it proved to be, who, in the plenitude of his repentance determined to punish his own pride—to submit himself to almost penal servitude, to subject himself to a discipline the slightest infraction of which would entail heavy consequences, or even, possibly, degradation.

All this young Pendragon had dared, his pride had submitted itself to a curb, his passion to a conqueror; for in the one severe mental shock which had ended in a fit of subdued rage, his mind had found a better balance; and when he returned to his native home, which desirable release was effected through the purchase of his discharge, it was with a heart deeply thankful to that Providence which not only restored his beloved father to reason, but which also directed him to the means of ruling himself, his passions and his pride.

For the rest—Sir Arthur's recovery was only intimated to young Pendragon in a letter by post—the friendly timber bailiff being the writer. Sergeant Smith became the envied possessor of the gold watch, and Captain Dash was prevailed on to accept the souvenir of the diamond ring; whilst on the day of his discharge Private Humble was recognized in his true character of Mr. Arthur Pendragon, and asked to join his brother gentlemen at mess; an honour which was politely but firmly declined, from motives of delicacy.

LILY LADE: A LEGEND OF MOTHER LUDLAM'S CAVE.

PREAMBLE.

“ A man he was to all the country dear,
And passing rich on forty pounds a-year.”

GOLDSMITH.

HAVING, in another tradition, given an illustration of clerical character not exactly to the credit of “ the cloth,” it is with the very greatest of pleasure that circumstances enable the author to afford a counterbalancing example of integrity and holy living, combined with simplicity and rare self-denial, in that of a gentleman, whom the license of literature permits to be placed in the same identical position as that occupied by his unworthy opposite. The Rev. James Lade, like the Rev. Simon Bullockwash, is a portrait drawn from nature, and the times ; but, as the reasons which operated in rendering it necessary to conceal *identification* in the one case, equally operate in the other, it will be useless for the reader to attempt raising the veil of mystification that enwraps both. Lily Lade is also no creation of the fancy, but a real personage, and the chief incidents of her career *perfectly true*, with the substitution of ideal for real names, and the alteration of a few dates.

CHAPTER I.

DURING the reign of William III., when to the chaos of revolutionary entanglement had succeeded a state of comparative order, and at the time when native partialities led the husband of Mary to *import* noblemen of his own creating from the swampy shores of his own water-land, there lived, on his own patrimonial estate, in Essex, the high and mighty, Philip Augustus Plantagenet Bragge, second Earl and tenth Baron of Knuckledown, a peer of the realm, immensely rich, terribly proud, and utterly insignificant in his personal exterior, being scarcely five feet high in his highest heeled shoes, with a voice like a cracked tin trumpet, and an eye that squinted so prodigiously, as to give him the appearance of forever trying to look into his own left ear.

In common with very many, whose physical disqualifications were obvious, the Earl of Knuckledown, from constantly believing himself to be the subject of invidious remark, consoled himself by an intense admiration of self, and indulged in such an exaggerated pride of everything belonging to, or even distantly related to his own style and dignity, that the ruling passion of his life became pride, not merely as the word itself is generally accepted, but a kind of pride which swallowed up his every thought, hope, and feeling ; a kind of delusion which amounted nigh to insanity, and which led him to believe that all the rest of the human race were vastly inferior to himself

because they were more than five feet high, had voices of musical power, and did *not* squint abominably.

This eccentric nobleman, who, apart from his absorbing weakness was not altogether a fool, had been twice married; firstly, to a lady who brought him three children—all females—named respectively, Agatha, Blanche, and Maude, all of whom were fine, well-grown, and healthy, as was their mother, who died at the expiration of ten years from her marriage; secondly, the Earl married a young and beautiful Frenchwoman, the daughter of an Ambassador, and by her had three children, all boys, who, taking after their father, were so extremely the opposite of their three step-sisters as to provoke uncomplimentary comparisons whenever opportunity afforded.

As a matter almost of course, the Earl idolised his three unsightly boys, and cared very little for his three beautiful girls; indeed, he would scarcely have cared for the latter at all, but that they were a portion of his personal dignity, were enrolled at Herald's College as leaves of his family tree, and were registered in his big family Bible, as having been born, &c., &c., whereby their persons became a property to be made the most of in some way or other for the credit of his high and mighty name.

When the death of his first Countess rendered the elevation of a second necessary, the Earl of Knuckledown bethought him that female children, if they were good for nothing else, were still available as a means of aggrandizement, matrimonially considered. With this view,

he caused his daughters to be educated as would most befit them for the elevated positions to which he mentally destined them—a French governess, the selection of his French wife, was engaged, and the three young ladies were carefully taught everything which fashion brought into vogue, to the utter exclusion of all that was truly good and really useful, a system which made the two youngest daughters all but utterly depraved, and the eldest of all, a romantic, thoughtless, but still good-hearted young woman, whose knowledge of the world was confined to the area of romance literature, such as then emanated from the impure French school.

When Lady Agatha, the eldest of the Earl's daughters, had arrived at the age of twenty-one years, Lady Blanche at that of eighteen, and Lady Maude at that of nigh seventeen, it pleased his Lordship to select for them as husbands, a Duke, a Marquis, and a Viscount, with each of whom, severally, he had made compact, and arranged preliminaries; let, therefore, his horror and consternation be described, by whosoever can describe it, when it was found that his eldest child, the Lady Agatha Plantaganet Bragge, had positively and indubitably eloped with a penniless subaltern officer, in a foot regiment, whose name was Lade, whose family were "nobodies," and whose acquaintance with his daughter was of but one fortnight's date, accidentally made on the hunting-field.

The English language is not strong enough to portray the rage, astonishment, and indignation of the

Earl of Knuckledown or that of his Countess ; it would therefore be utterly useless to attempt giving even a very faint idea, particularly when it became known that the young lady, being full twenty-one years old, could not be punished in any way, nor her husband be rendered amenable to any known law. All that the Earl could do was to be revenged to the utmost of his power ; for which purpose he, as preliminary to all else, summoned to his presence the whole household, from his Countess, children, and chaplain, down to the lowest menial of his kitchen ; and, calling for his big family Bible, then and there erased from its record the name of his daughter Agatha ; after which he swore a frightful oath to disown her as his child, never to acknowledge her or her posterity, never to bestow one farthing on her or her husband, and to use his best endeavour to bring both to starvation, if such could be compassed by any means within his power.

It would serve no good purpose to relate those means which the Earl did take to blight the prospects of his discarded child's husband. Though not upon particularly friendly terms with King William, whom the Earl of Knuckledown looked upon as a mushroom—nay, a mere toadstool, compared with himself, yet there were ways and means by which a tortuous policy always enabled a rich man to damage or to ruin a poor man ; and of these ways and means the Earl availed himself, whereby Ensign Lade, at the expiration of eight months from

his marriage, found himself mixed up—innocently, but still ostensibly—with one of those intrigues amongst the Jacobins, which led to his being indicted for high treason, and ultimately executed at Flushing, just as his young wife was delivered of a female child.

It is one of those strange incongruities, inexplicable to our nature, that the Earl of Knuckledown, who could *see* dishonour and degradation to his name in the alliance of a poor but honest family, should yet *feel* none at the commission of a foul crime, or even at the odium resulting therefrom, in the recorded death of his son-in-law as a felon; but so it was. The Earl, who had fully calculated on the result of his machinations, heard of the terrible result without a pang, or stranger still, even with a degree of relish; the words “executed for high treason,” sounding to his mental ear almost as a slight increase of dignity, such as brought the hated name of “Lade” within legitimate reach of his eternal animosity.

In order that this history may be as little as possible disgraced with the doings of the Earl and his family, this chapter shall conclude by a very brief outline of two or three matters, which will enable the subsequent thread of events to progress unbroken.

The Countess of Knuckledown, together with the Ladies Blanche and Maude, so thoroughly identified themselves with the Earl's resentment, that they rejected all overtures on the part of Lady Agatha Lade,

refusing to enter upon any communication, and entirely discarding her from their hearts. The Lady Blanche married a Duke, and the Lady Maude a Marquis, in exact accordance with their father's command; whilst their sickly, undersized brothers grew up in due course of childhood, making vast exertions to become tall, but never realizing any advance beyond that of the smallest possible altitude.

As to poor Lady Lade, who, on the death of her husband, was left in absolute starvation, she was enabled, only through the charity of strangers, to embark on board a fishing vessel, bound for Harwich; at which port she arrived penniless and broken-hearted—to die of grief and shame, leaving her fatherless child utterly unprovided for.

CHAPTER II.

THE Reverend James Lade, elder brother and sole surviving relative of the late Ensign Lade, was Perpetual Curate of Aldershot, and by reason of the slenderness of his income, rather than any other cause, a solitary bachelor at the age of thirty-five. A very learned man was the Rev. James Lade, deep in the mysteries of Mathematics, Greek, and Hebrew; an eloquent preacher, an able teacher, humane and charitable almost to a fault; a man to be esteemed, to be

reverenced, almost to be worshipped, by his parishioners ; a man who, as Oliver Goldsmith has told, was

“To all the country dear,
And passing rich on forty pounds a-year.”

For such, indeed, was almost literally the fact, that exact sum being precisely what his income would have been, had he not taken “private pupils” to increase it, and spent one clear half of his entire emolument in charitable doings.

It would but serve to prolong the narrative to narrate all the noble deeds of this kind and affectionate parish priest, who, so far as human eyes could judge, was a perfect specimen of the true Christian pastor, unstained by those vices of mock humility and empty show of devotion which disfigure so many others of his cloth.

At the particular epoch of which we now write, the Rev. James Lade was beginning to feel the solitariness of his position ; cooped up in a small Parsonage House, away from anything like society, in receipt of a very slender income, and with but one pupil to enliven his daily occupation. In brief, the Rev. gentleman was pondering in his mind the propriety of taking unto himself a wife, in the person of a lady who was both beautiful and amiable, lacking only that one desideratum, which, to a man situated like himself, was almost indispensable, namely, wealth.

The lady of his love was poor, true ; but then, had she been rich the Rev. gentleman would have incurred the imputation of seeking her for her money alone. Now that the lady in question was indubitably poor—that is to say, as poor has himself—no such odious crime could be laid to his charge. Even as it was, would the lady accept him if he proposed ? That was a serious question ; he had not as yet proposed, and was in the deepest depths of cogitation regarding the propriety of making an offer, when his servant, a staid, matronly female, entered his study, presenting a letter superscribed in so strange a fashion, that the messenger who brought it remained in waiting to know if its delivery was correct.

The letter bore an address as follows :—

“ The Reverend j Laide—Parson Holdershote
ni London—to be red directly—in haste.”

The caligraphy of it was abominable, and the place-mark was Harwich. After turning and twisting the letter about, like any less educated person, the Rev. gentleman at length opened it, and with the greatest difficulty was enabled to decipher the intelligence contained therein, which was to the effect that a lady, who claimed to be his sister-in-law, lay dead at a certain hotel, and that her living child, as well as her dead body, awaited his immediate attention.

Horror-struck and dismayed, for he had had no

previous intimation of his brother's death, the bewildered clergyman packed up a few clothes, and stocked his slender purse with all his available cash, amounting to less than ten pounds only and set out forthwith on his melancholy pilgrimage to Harwich, where he arrived on the day but one following, just in time to look upon the face of his dead relative before she was committed to a grave but ill fitting for an Earl's daughter.

The sorrowful task of collecting together such information as was afforded by a few private letters, and his late brother's journal, occupied him two days, during which time he was seriously puzzled what to do with the little waif thrown upon his sole protection by the hand of fate—the mode, too, of his brother's death, the mysteriousness of all the circumstances attending it, and, almost more than all, the poverty of his own means, rendered his situation singularly unhappy; what to do he knew not, nor whom to seek for advice, much less for assistance—his worldly wealth being reduced to somewhat less than twenty shillings, after having paid the expense of his poor sister-in-law's funeral, and other incidental matters.

To leave the little child in Harwich, under the care of some female, was his most prominent idea; but so often as it obtruded itself, one look upon the fair, frail, little creature, with its dimpled, innocent face, instantly banished so cold a thought, and set him longing to clasp its tiny shape within his muscular embrace; no, the

thought must be dismissed, and for ever. He would carry the child with him to London ; submit it, as in duty bound, to the care of its maternal grandfather, and if rejected, as he had reason to anticipate, he would carry it to his own home, fondle it in his own heart, dismiss from his mind the half-formed intention of matrimony, and rear up the treasure sent him by heaven as a sacred trust which should be its own reward through all the remaining years of his life.

This decision arrived at, his only difficulty was how to obtain money, and how to convey his little charge to London ; as regarded the first difficulty, he could certainly have borrowed money had he been at home, but he was in a strange place where he was unknown, also, he had a great repugnance to borrow at any time : well—he could sell something—his watch—true. So the Rev. gentleman, having no other resource, did sell his watch, an old-fashioned silver time-keeper, much more like a turnip than anything else ; and the proceeds of the sale, three pounds ten shillings, afforded him all the means he could desire ; but as regarded the second difficulty, he was even yet more embarrassed. There were but two ways of reaching London—by sea, or by waggon. By sea would be too long and tedious ; by waggon only a trifle less so ; but it was the preferable of the two. Next came the difficulty of attending to the child's wants and nourishment ; here he was clearly at fault. A female attendant was indispensable, and his funds would not

suffice for the payment of one. At length, an unexpected piece of good fortune presented itself. The master of a sailing vessel, having his wife on board, offered to take charge of the infant so far as London, and right joyfully did the poor clergyman accept an offer of safe conveyance to that place for the sum of forty shillings, inclusive of everything needed.

On arriving in London, a hackney coach, or vehicle doing duty for such, quickly took the Rev. James Lade and his delicate charge to the residence of the Earl of Knuckledown, in Wardour Street, Soho, where, leaving his little niece in the care of its nurse, whilst he himself should attempt to soften the grandfather's heart, he ascended the wide staircase, and found himself face to face with the diminutive nobleman, who no sooner learned his applicant's mission, than he fell into an insane passion of rage, and after commanding his servant to "kick" his reverend visitor out, took an awful oath before heaven that, "*if he ever so much as looked upon his daughter Agatha's child, he hoped he might be stricken blind.*"

Overwhelmed with horror at the impiety of such wickedness, the humbled servant of God took his way out of the bad man's presence, descended to his inhospitable threshold, and there, shaking the dust from his feet, departed, more in sorrow than in anger, yet almost glad his mission had failed, only but for the manner of its failure.

Being yet reduced to great straits for the means of reaching Aldershot village, a task in those days much more difficult of achieving than now, the poor clergyman, in his horror of borrowing money, was constrained to sell his travelling cloak for the means wherewith to ensure a place in the Portsmouth waggon; where, unaided by female assistance, and accompanied only by a bottle of milk, he continued to minister to the wants of his little charge through ten weary hours, and at length found his courage and devotion rewarded by entering his own cheerful home about nine o'clock on the fifteenth day of his departure from its threshold.

CHAPTER III.

GREAT indeed was the astonishment of Mrs. Sterne, the Rev. James Lade's housekeeper, on perceiving her master without his travelling cloak, and with some burthen in his arms which looked more like a huge bundle of straw than anything else, for the poor parson had been able to procure nothing better or more serviceable than that to enwrap the outer garments of his treasure; but greater even than her astonishment was the housekeeper's admiration, when from the unfolded straw appeared the fairy loveliness and warm beauty of the little nestling, as radiant and happy in its unconsciousness as if it had been the child of an emperor, cradled in ermine and swaddled in eider down.

From that day forth the hamlet of Aldershot was greatly divided as to whether or not its minister would become a married man. The ladies, one and all, declared that it was impossible he could bring up and educate a young niece without proper female assistance and advice, whilst the male portion thought he was too circumspect a man to introduce a wife whose maternal cares would be forestalled. And these latter prophets were in the right, for the Rev. gentleman did not take unto himself a wife, but by the aid, firstly of his housekeeper, and in later times, of a benevolent female friend, did contrive to educate his young niece, who, on the day following her arrival at the parsonage, was duly christened by the name of Lilian, after her paternal grandmother—a name which very soon become shortened to “Lily,” not so much for the convenience of familiar use, as because of the extreme fairness of its bearer, whose skin was so delicately white, and whose form was so graceful and fragile, that no comparison, save with the lily of the valley, could do justice to its modest and retiring beauty.

Sixteen years passed over and away. The Rev. James Lade, now in his fifty-first year, continued unmarried, not so much to the astonishment of his fair parishioners as might have been calculated on, for the constant residence of his little niece, as she progressed from infancy towards womanhood, served the purpose of making his Parsonage House a constant source of attraction to female visitors, all of whom seemed to think the presence of that one

small instance of womankind a sufficient excuse for loading the poor parson with presents of one kind or another, whilst "Lily" herself became the pet of every one, gentle or simple, rich or poor, old or young; and well did the fair creature merit the favours showered upon her, for a more affectionate, winning, and artless little beauty never stole away people's hearts, or used them more tenderly when stolen, than pretty "Lily Lade," the parson's orphan niece.

All that the most affectionate kindness could do, and all that the most careful teaching could effect, had served to render this young lady a mark for the admiration of the neighbourhood, without making her in the slightest degree vain of either her accomplishments or her good looks. It would seem, indeed, that in outward form as well as in mental disposition, she was perfection's self, were it not that such an implication would savour of insipidity; for where was ever yet seen that mortal creature so absolutely perfect, as not to be susceptible of much improvement by means of a little—a very little flaw? Lily Lade had one slight drawback in her disposition, if it might be so called, which was as follows. Her likings were all towards humility, towards plainness of apparel, towards rusticity of ideas. She loved flowers more than gems; a simple muslin dress better than silks or satin; a ramble on foot more dearly than a carriage ride, and simple country "talk" infinitely beyond the refined conversation of her dear uncle's fashionable

visitors—a peculiarity of so remarkable a kind, considering the lordly stock whence she sprung, that it excited universal comment. But notwithstanding this drawback, Lily Lade was indisputably the belle of all the country round, and might have had her pick and choice of all the eligible young gentlemen within a certain rank of life, throughout the whole parish, or beyond it either.

During the sixteen years which had elapsed since the opening event of this tale, the Rev. James Lade's monetary affairs had prospered considerably; not that any increase of stipend had accrued from Church patronage, but by reason of his having taken pupils, at a fair rate of remuneration, during the whole of that time, several of whom had since made a figure in life, and spread the fame of their teacher. It was to the aid thus gained that he was enabled to give his darling niece the sort of education that had made her an ornament as well as a treasure in his house, the chief agent of this good result having been a very kind widow lady, a schoolmate of his mother, who, falling into distressed circumstances, had accepted the post of "gouvernante," which she resigned only with her life, just as Lily had attained her fifteenth year.

During, also, this sixteen years, nothing had been heard of the Knuckledown family, and so completely had the connexion between them and the young heroine of this tale been severed, that all recollection of it

had nearly passed away. As for Lily herself, the subject had never been mentioned to her at all during fifteen years, and was only entered upon at the expiration of that time in order to account for certain matters which her ripe understanding rendered necessary.

The Rev. James Lade had intended to have given his niece but a very brief outline of what had occurred within his own knowledge, trusting to the meekness of Lily's disposition for her being satisfied with but little. He was therefore rather startled when, for the first time in his life, he found that young lady's eyes kindle, and her bosom heave convulsively, on hearing her parents' fate detailed; as also by her somewhat imperatively insisting upon every iota of information he could give, down to production of her father's diary, and a few fragments of letters in the handwriting of her mother. He was also greatly pressed to tell the exact particulars of his visit to the Earl in London, where that wicked oath was sworn—never to look upon the face of his daughter's child, on the penalty of blindness.

Outwardly, his niece soon regained her equanimity of disposition, but inwardly a striking change had taken place. She looked upon her grandfather as the actual murderer of her parents, and although no one can rightly be said to hate a person never actually seen, yet Lily Lade, if she did not personally hate the

Earl of Knuckledown, yet looked upon him, mentally, as one so despicably odious, and wickedly beyond the pale of forgiveness, that she determined no power on earth should induce her to claim affinity with him under any circumstance that fortune might offer.

CHAPTER IV.

Up to the age of sixteen, Lily Lade, although in a manner besieged by would-be lovers, never showed the slightest preference for any one over another, but laughingly turned aside from all, not so much in dislike or indifference, as in a humble contentment with her present condition. Being so young, her uncle made no comments, rightly thinking there was yet plenty of time wherein to choose a protector through life, even in five or six years to come, but yet there was a nervous something about the prospects of Lily's future life, which hung like a cloud about his mental vision, and which would not have indisposed him towards the favouring of a thoroughly eligible lover for his niece, if fortune should think fit to throw one in her way. It was not that he felt any misgivings about his own health, or reasonable prospect of living over years to come, wherein he himself might be her protector; but if the idea could be said to wear any definite form, it seemed as though he would have been happier to know that his darling might be married "and settled," as the phrase

goes, under his own eye, and within his own guardianship, than to incur the possibility of her becoming torn away by some yet unseen agency of her mother's relations, far off as seemed any such possibility.

As yet, Lily had shown no preference. Handsome young men, of good family and condition, had presented themselves, rich young men had sought opportunities of introduction, but their time was not come. Humbler suitors had timidly followed in their wake with no better success, and one, out of the two private pupils whom her uncle admitted into his house, had shown strong indications of attachment. He was the son of a Baronet, and would some day or other become immensely rich. Lily, whose daily occupations brought her into hourly contact with this young gentleman, had shown him more deference than she had ever before shown to one of the opposite sex, and had raised in his breast something akin to hope, greatly to the annoyance of his fellow-pupil, the son of a poor physician in the neighbourhood, who also had dared to hope, though without the same slight reason, as the Baronet's son. It was now that an incident occurred which broke the monotony of affairs, and led to something more definite in their relative positions through life.

It had been the custom of the Rev. James Lade to devote the Monday of every week to out-door recreations, combined with the exercise of botanical science, in

which Lily, as well as his two pupils, were advanced students.

Upon the present occasion, the party of four took their way from Aldershot towards a rising ground covered with wood, about half a mile east of Farnham, and in which place there is situated a very remarkable cavern, known to the present day as "Mother Ludlam's Cave." A foolish superstition had hedged this place with all sorts of terrors for the vulgar, and made it to be little visited except by the educated classes, who viewed it as a rare natural curiosity, or by professed marvel-seekers, who made it the theme of absurd traditions.

This natural cavern, which had probably been the resort of robbers in the olden time, contained many objects worthy of a botanist's curiosity; in it grew mosses, lichens, and fungi of species somewhat rare, whilst in its vicinity grew wild flowers, weeds, and medicinal plants in great abundance, forming, within a small nucleus, a botanical garden every way worthy of examination and study by real lovers of nature.*

* For a detailed account of this remarkable cavern (said to be of extraordinary extent), see the local histories of the place, some of which relate remarkable stories of it—amongst others, that a "duck" placed within the cavern, and prevented egress at the Moor Park end, was found to come out at St. Catherine's Hill, near Guildford, a distance of ten miles off. This account of the duck is most probably what our French neighbours call a "CANARD."

To this spot then, so favourable for their purpose, wended the Rev. James Lade, together with Lily, and the two pupils before mentioned, whose names were Lionel Fitzgibbon and Walter Harewood.

After wandering through a portion of Moor Park, then in the occupation of Sir William Temple, and selecting a few specimens of rarity, the party betook themselves to "Mother Ludlam's Cave," and set out about the more serious business of their day's labour; several hours had elapsed, the cheerful brightness of a June sun had made their excursion pleasant in an unusual degree, being neither too powerful in its heat, nor leaving the shady forest glades too cool for enjoyment; but by the hour of three, a sudden change came over the sky—deep, dark, and unfathomable clouds suddenly obscured its brightness, and a thunderstorm appeared imminent. Our party were beginning to congratulate themselves on their good fortune in being possessed of so safe a shelter as the cavern, when on looking out, they espied several ladies and gentlemen, evidently sight-seers from one of the neighbouring seats, advancing rapidly towards the same shelter, as if well aware of its locality. Withdrawing themselves considerably from the cavern's entrance, our party sought rather to avoid impertinent collision than to secrete themselves from notice; but it was evident that the in-comers, whoever they might be, considered that they were alone in their place of refuge.

These new comers soon betrayed their own identity,

by means of their conversation, and proved to be no less personages than Sir William Temple, his far-famed secretary Jonathan (afterwards Dean) Swift, several ladies of fashion visiting Moor Park, and last, though not least, in one sense of the word, the high and mighty Earl of Knuckledown himself, then in his sixty-sixth year, and smaller, as well as more insignificant, than ever.

No sooner did the Rev. James Lade recognise the latter personage than he shrunk still further back than before, and those whose eyes had accustomed themselves to the dim light of the cavern might have remarked a pallor of countenance betokening some inward pang, not easily to be kept under subjection.

Listening to a conversation not intended for strange ears has ever been considered the act of an ill-bred person. Now the two youths Fitzgibbon and Howard, totally unacquainted with the feelings which might have actuated their tutor towards violating extreme propriety, felt all the awkwardness of their position, and endeavoured by sundry means to indicate the fact of their presence, merely to prevent the possible suspicion of their being deemed eavesdroppers, and not without success, for the new comers immediately ceased conversing, and Mr. Jonathan Swift, who wore no outward mark of being a clergyman, commenced questioning the two young men as to whether they, likewise, had been overtaken by the storm. On being told that they and their party

were "botanizing," he expressed pleasure at the fact, and turning round somewhat briskly, introduced them to the notice of Sir William Temple, the Earl of Knuckledown, and their accompanying ladies, during which time our poor parson and his niece kept systematically in the background, the former bearing upon his mind an undefined dread of something impending, which was not within his power to avoid.

The storm was now at its height; rain fell in torrents, and lightning flashed—not the harmless sheet lightning of midsummer heat, but the blue, forked, and vivid flash which rends huge trees asunder, and strikes living creatures dead on the instant. Each individual within the cavern shrunk back, the ladies of Sir William Temple's party with much real, and some affected, terror. In the commingling of persons thus occurring, it happened that the Earl of Knuckledown and the Rev. James Lade met together somewhat unceremoniously; the recognition—now that all eyes had become accustomed to the subdued light—was both mutual and instantaneous, notwithstanding the long interval since their first meeting. Common politeness necessitated a bow on either side, and an accession of courage on the part of our parson, as inexplicable to himself as disagreeable to the Earl, forced him into making allusions to the past which had more discreetly been avoided; there rushed into our poor parson's mind an idea that could but Lord Knuckledown once look upon the beautiful features

and womanly form of his grandchild, all past feelings would become forgotten in the new-born admiration of the present; with this view the Rev. gentleman pressed one single requisition on the Earl, he urged him to look upon the fair Lilian's face, if only for one single moment, and on the Earl's endeavour to repulse him by advancing to the front of the cavern, followed him up so closely, that in a moment of overpowering rage, the old nobleman once more invoked from heaven the curse of blindness if ever he sought to look upon his grandchild's face.

Scarcely were these unnatural words uttered, than one vivid flash of lightning illumined the whole cavern, followed by a shriek of agony such as nature evokes only from the lips of man when a terrible visitation from on high speaks through heart and brain together.

"My eyes, my eyes! great Heaven, my eyes are burning," shrieked the Earl of Knuckledown, and in one moment the whole cavern was in commotion. The old nobleman had fallen down flat on his face, endeavouring, as it were, to quench imaginary flames by rolling himself in the dust; as for the ladies, they one and all, not even excepting Lilian, expressed their horror and consternation; whilst Sir William Temple, calling to the other gentlemen present for their assistance to restrain Lord Knuckledown, issued quickly from the cavern in order to search for his carriage and servants, which he knew to be nigh at hand.

Fortunately for all, the carriage was within a few

paces, and in a short time his lordship, totally blind, as well as nearly insensible, was borne off, attended by his commiserating companions, to the mansion of their host at Moor Park, where we will leave them all to their reflections and sorrows ; merely concluding this chapter by adding that from that day thenceforward, the Earl of Knuckledown remained totally blind, and although feeling, within himself, that his visitation was a reprimand from on high, continued to hold towards his grandchild that degree of unrelenting hate which had characterized him from the beginning.

CHAPTER V.

It was not until their return home that our parson informed his young relative and friends whom it was they had been so unfortunate as to encounter, and who had been so signally punished in the vanity of his presumption ; his recital fell deeply on the minds of all, but as none could say within their own hearts, that the punishment of his Lordship was otherwise than in accordance with justice, both divine and human, it could scarcely be told they sorrowed for his sorrow, although assuredly they pitied him, even as men pity a dying malefactor.

In course of time this incident became, if not forgotten, at least not spoken of, and Mother Ludlam's Cavern was, by general agreement, avoided in all their subsequent excursions of a botanical character ; but from that

memorable day one other incident may have been said to claim date, though why exactly from that particular time is not quite apparent ; this new incident was no less than a growing germ of preference on the part of Lily Lade for one of her two "resident" admirers, as she called them, over the other.

Walter Harewood was the fortunate man upon whom Lily began to bestow her smiles, greatly to the chagrin of the baronet's son, Lionel Fitzgibbon, who had flattered himself that the prospect of future wealth and position would have had its weight with the young lady in favour of himself ; but herein he was mistaken, as men frequently are, when they endeavour to fathom the motives of the other sex, for so nicely balanced were, at one time, the merits of both suitors, that Lily was compelled to search the very depths of her own heart in order to discover such little motive cause as might determine her course, and found it at last, not in the wealth of the one suitor, but in the poverty of the other ; her innate independence of mind revolting at the base notion of marrying for money, whilst a tinge of romance, coupled with a little female obstinacy, united to bring about such feelings as enabled Walter Harewood to improve his opportunities, which he, on his part, was not slow to do, being a young man of acute perceptions as well as sanguine temperament.

A few weeks later, Lionel Fitzgibbon, being called on to rejoin his parents at a foreign watering-place, whither

they had gone for the benefit of their health, took leave of his Rev. tutor, of Lilian, and of Walter Harewood, clearly foreseeing the entire destruction of his own hopes, but generous enough to forego all vain jealousy, as also to feel cordially within his heart those loving wishes for the welfare and happiness of all which trembled on his lips at parting.

From the period of this young man's departure, Walter Harewood and Lily Lade were considered as affianced lovers, so far as their chances of a settlement in life could be viewed in advance; but Lily being still very young and Walter in anticipation of his career at the University, their betrothal was to be regarded more in the light of a compact hereafter, to be completed or broken off according to circumstances, than as an irrevocable event.

It is strange how very quick is the growth of love, when once the germ has taken root and put forth its first tender leaflets to the warmth of a summer sun; two or three months back, Lily had really not felt the slightest preference in favour of Walter Harewood, but now her attachment began to grow with such rapid strides that she could scarce bear him to go out of her sight beyond an hour together; and the prospect of his departure for Cambridge began to inflict tortures upon her heart. She even attempted to induce him to forego the advantages of a college education, and content himself with the very excellent progress he had made under

her uncle, but in this matter Walter himself could not decide, insomuch as it was his father's dearest wish that he should adopt the profession of medicine, the highroad to which was through the University alone, and in furtherance of which his only wealthy relative had promised, pecuniarily, to assist.

Man, however, proposes, and God disposes. The father of Walter Harewood most unexpectedly fell a prey to his beloved profession, with scarce an hour's notice. He had been most assiduously attending a succession of fever cases, more as a lover of art than of necessity, for they occurred in the parish poor-house, where other professional attendance than his own was legitimately bound and paid for; the infection was of a new and strange kind, baffling ordinary experience, and therefore deeply interesting to pathologists. Dr. Harewood took the infection, which quickly deprived him of all consciousness, and before any arrangement of his affairs could take place, or even his dear son could be recognised, the good and faithful disciple of mercy was himself a corpse.

The shock to Walter was very very great, far greater indeed than that he subsequently received when it was found that, through the failure of some mercantile speculation, in which his father had rashly embarked, the good physician had died not only intestate, but somewhat also in debt.

This great misfortune left him no means of following any profession at all, except through the kindness of

the one rich but distant relative who had promised to pay the expenses of his University career. But misfortunes rarely come single, for, after an interval of time, vainly spent in a struggle with his own love of independence, it was the young man's still deeper misfortune to hear that his wealthy relative, acting under the advice of designing persons, had made a will devising his entire property to some charitable foundation—all except one hundred pounds, which was the extent of his own legacy, and that the old man had died suspiciously soon after that transaction.

With these misfortunes on his head, Walter became a sadly changed young man, but in proportion as his fortunes lowered, and his elasticity of spirits yielded, so did the strength of Lily's affection increase; we are almost afraid to add that so deeply did the sympathies of our young heroine become excited, that she almost prayed that still further misfortunes might occur in order that the strength of her own love might develop itself. Not so with her reverend guardian, for parson though he was, the world had wrought upon him the usual experience of mankind, and taught him that poverty, though not indeed a crime in the abstract sense, was yet the gravest of all sins against love and matrimony. Walter Harewood was his favourite pupil and most esteemed young friend, one whom he trusted in implicitly as regards honour, honesty, and virtue; but the sudden accumulation of misfortunes he had suffered had left

him without a profession, and with scarce any means of adopting one of those semi-professional occupations which were just then beginning to step between the tradesman and the gentleman; but whilst the good parson was turning about in his mind the pros and cons of his pupil's future career, one other, and the crowning misfortune of all fell upon the devoted head of Walter Harewood. He had been to the house of his late parent, in Farnham, in order to collect together the few books and personalties which the kind consideration of his father's creditors had left to his disposal, when, whilst using a pair of tall library steps, his foot slipped and he fell heavily, breaking his leg and straining his back so as to entail a severe surgical operation, the result of which was lameness for life, after an interval of three months' severe torture.

The climax of Walter Harewood's misfortunes was also the climax of poor Lily Lade's affection for her unhappy affianced, whom she now looked on as all her own by virtue of his poverty, his sufferings, and his totally ruined prospects; a devotion which, on the part of young Harewood, was so deeply appreciated as to be almost deplored, for his own feelings, however warm and buoyant, were almost crushed under the weight of his many severe visitations.

As for the parson, his unworldly mind prevented him from looking altogether disapprovingly on the beautiful strength of affection which his niece displayed, but he

still felt all the difficulties of his trust without seeing the way to avoid yet greater future evil. He held consultation after consultation with his pupil, in order to suggest some line of conduct which might offer a hope of future prosperity; but after exhausting all their patience, the one uniform result for ever presented itself, and that only in the very untempting form of a scholastic establishment. After a time this plan was agreed on, and by the aid of the one hundred pounds' legacy bequeathed by his distant relative, Mr. Walter Harewood issued the advertisements and notices which intimated that he would be happy to instruct a limited number of young gentlemen in the elements of a sound classical and commercial education, including mathematics both pure and mixed, &c., and it was then agreed that so soon as his pupils (in perspective) should amount to twelve in number, his marriage with Lily should take place; Lily being at that present time close upon her twenty-first birthday, and Walter Harewood fully arrived at his twenty-third.

CHAPTER VI.

It is now time that our story should return to the fortunes of its most patrician character.

Since the terrible day which had brought the fearful curse of blindness on that illustrious nobleman the Earl of Knuckledown, misfortunes had rained down upon his

devoted head thick and threefold. Of his two daughters, the one who married a duke died childless, and the second, after nine years of misery entailed through utter dissimilarity of tastes, and mutual personal dislike, committed herself to such an extent as to elope with an Austrian prince, who no sooner obtained possession than he neglected her, and finally deserted her in a foreign land, where she ultimately fell a prey to absolute want.

Of this nobleman's three sons there remains yet worse, if possible, to record, for the eldest, a weak and puny creature, lived only till five years of age, the second only till four, leaving the third sole heir to the immense family wealth—a youth of eighteen, the exact counterpart of his father both in person and in mind, only, if possible, a thought more insignificant, self-sufficient, and passionate of disposition. It was with his whole hopes concentrated on this last scion of the house of Knuckledown, that the Earl had ventured out of his native land on a visit to Paris, where the more refined arts of dancing and personal deportment were then, as now, carried out to their utmost perfection. Among other accomplishments that of fencing was greatly to be desired for the young nobleman, and to the “atelier” of an eminent professor, therefore, was the young gentleman consigned for two mortal hours every day, under the able tuition of Monsieur Adolphe de-la-tour Baroche, *ci-divant Maître d'armes* to the second battalion of *Chasseurs-à-pied*.

Persons who are in the habit of frequenting the rooms

of Mons. Angelo in London, and who there become accustomed to the safe-looking foils which are, we believe, made with a sort of permanent button at the end, may perhaps feel a little surprised at being told that one century ago, and particularly in Paris, foils were neither more nor less than bona fide small-swords, or truly speaking "spits," with little buttons at their extremities easily taken off or put on, for indeed so great was the skill of most gentlemen, in those days, that it was only very rarely that they even practised the art of fence with any blunt weapon.

In order not to protract the reader's expectation, we will at once proceed to the end of this portion of our tale, and record that, in an unlucky moment, the heir of the house of Knuckledown, whilst engaged with his vigorous tutor, in the art of fence, was most unluckily, and quite accidentally, run through the lungs with a foil, from which the button had dropped only a moment before. His death was almost instantaneous, and fell so heavily upon the old Earl himself, that for many months his own life was in danger, and though he did ultimately recover his bodily health, his mind, preying on itself, became so unhinged that his medical advisers counselled rapid change of air and scene as the only means of its recovery from utter prostration.

For several months the Earl wandered about from place to place, an object of pity rather than commiseration, till by degrees his thoughts wandered towards the

one sole relative that fortune had left him in the wide, wide world.

Lily Lade, the repudiated child of his discarded and disowned daughter, stood before his mind's eye, the one small bright spot between present misery and future utter darkness. He would seek her out, claim her from her guardians, whoever they might be, would make her rich, would cover her with jewels, would marry her to some man of high rank, would yet call her "daughter," "grandchild," and listen to the voices, though he might never see the features, of one more generation having his own blood in its veins. The more he dwelt on this possibility, the more determined he became, and having once made up his mind, he lost no time in setting on foot all necessary inquiries whereby the habitation of the Honourable Miss Lade (as he persisted in calling Lily) was made known.

Fully determined on obtaining possession of his grandchild, and never for one moment doubting her joyful consent to exchange her humble position for one of grandeur and ostentation, the Earl commanded his state-coach to be made ready, and relays of horses to be forwarded to every convenient post-town on the line of road to Farnham (the then nearest place of note to Aldershot); but before setting out on his journey, with a mixture of childish folly and silly pride, caused to be procured and packed, several changes of costly dresses, together with jewels and other finery, the sight

of which was calculated, as he hoped, to carry delight and pleasant envy into the heart of a young maiden whose aspirations had probably never ascended beyond a fine muslin dress and a coral necklace. Armed with this "heavy ammunition" of vanity, we leave the Earl of Knuckledown to complete his arrangements, whilst, for the last time, we carry our reader back to the humble Parsonage House of the Rev. James Lade at Aldershot.

CHAPTER VII.

A BEAUTIFUL summer's evening was about to close a day of entire and perfect happiness to the inmates of that happy home; it was the evening before the marriage day of Lily Lade and Walter Harewood, and only a few months after Lily's own twenty-first birthday.

Walter Harewood's pupils had now reached twelve in number. His school was established, his fortunes on the increase, although far from magnificent in their aspect; the happy party of three had just concluded their last meal, for it was then bright daylight at half-past eight o'clock. Walter and Lily were sitting together in that loving and confident familiarity which betokens perfect confidence, and our Rev. friend was calmly contemplating their enjoyment from his easy chair opposite them. A gentle knock at the door, responded to by an instantaneous "come in," produced the immediate entrance of a cherry-cheeked damsel, bearing a very

light but yet somewhat bulky package. "Please, Miss Lily, the milliner has sent this home at last, and wishes to know if she may help dress you to-morrow morning, if she comes at eight o'clock." Whereupon up rose Lily, and after a good deal of whispering at the door, dismissed her handmaid with a message, supposed to be satisfactory.

A little bantering took place between Walter and Lily, relative to the propriety of his seeing the wedding dress before it was put on, which little matter ended, as any one would suppose it might, by the display of the article in question, which, after all, was indeed but a very humble display, consisting of nothing but a pure white muslin dress, set off with white ribbons of the plainest and most inexpensive kind imaginable, such as the poorest milkmaid in the parish might have afforded, without ornament of any kind—white, pure, and spotless.

Walter looked with approving eyes, and Lily listened with blushing face to his remarks upon the simplicity of his bride's attire, and it was whilst thus mutually happy and contented, that the attention of all three was suddenly arrested by the stoppage of a gorgeous state carriage, drawn by four smoking horses, and escorted by several liveried attendants, at the outer gate of the Parsonage House.

Still more was our party astonished, when one of the liveried menials somewhat ostentatiously opened the gate,

walked up the pathway, and demanded of the open-mouthed servant-maid if her master was at home.

As a matter of course, the Rev. Mr. Lade himself questioned the man, and learned to his utter bewilderment, that his visitor was no less a personage than the Earl of Knuckledown himself. Almost before an invitation could be extended, the old nobleman, assisted by two servants, descended from the cumbrous vehicle, and made way towards the house.

Time had indeed wrought fearfully upon the humbled nobleman, for his form had shrunken from five feet in height to little more than four feet six inches. His hair was white, thin, and straggling, tied behind in a very small bag, and his thin, hollow features, made ghastly by the palpable loss of sight, looked more like those of a shrivelled mummy than those of a living creature. Yet, with all this utter prostration of physical power, there was that in his countenance which bespoke the old nature still—pride, self-confidence and extreme vanity had set their seal too strongly ever to become effaced, and their sign was on him still ; for the old man, when guided to the parson's vacant easy-chair, flung himself upon its seat as if more inclined to cavil at its homeliness than to feel thankful for the repose it gave him.

After the first surprise of arrival had sobered down, and not until after the two liveried servants were ordered beyond earshot, did the Earl communicate the object of

his mission, concluding his somewhat imperious recital by commanding Lily to bid her friends farewell, and depart with him instantly, never minding her clothes or any other rubbish!

“Hold!” exclaimed a stentorian voice, which no one then present recognised as that of the meek country parson, whose voice in truth it was, now, for the first time in his quiet and virtuous life, roused to absolute passion.

“Hold! Earl of Knuckledown—peer of the realm—grandfather of your innocent child—murderer of your own daughter—fiend in human shape!—all, each of these, and more, if that I were to insult the Majesty of Heaven by speaking it. Listen, and hear me.

“Touch but my dear niece with your little finger, in the way of command, and that very instant I thrust you out of my doors. She is my child, not yours—my own brother’s child by blood, my own dear child by love and adoption; she was never yours; you disowned her, repudiated her, would have left her to freeze, to starve, to die; she is mine, not yours; mine till to-morrow morning only, when she will become a happy wife in the possession of a deserving husband. Why do you come to disturb our felicity? why do you bring the dishonour of your presence upon our reputable home? Go back, old man, go back. I speak but with the heart and in the name of my dead brother’s child, now standing in the room, when I bid the destroyer

of her parents to depart this house, lest evil betide—”

Exhausted by the unwonted effort, and, for the only time of his life, overcome by emotions beyond control, the Rev. gentleman sunk down in a chair almost powerless; Lily, at the same moment, throwing herself into his arms and hiding her face in his breast.

Before the Earl of Knuckledown could half recover from the astonishment into which he was thrown, Walter Harewood, now fully cognizant of his position, rose up calmly, and addressed him as follows—

“My Lord—Earl—I, a humble schoolmaster of this parish, but destined, nevertheless, to become the husband of yonder fair maiden before this time to-morrow, with the full consent of her only recognised relative, and by virtue of her own promise, hereby acquaint you that I am cognizant of Miss Lilian Lade’s whole history, and of the position she holds with regard to yourself. Were it not that to doubt her repudiation of your authority would be an insult, I would leave the choice to her verbal decision; but, as it is, I have only to join my request to that of her uncle, and call upon you to depart—peaceably—lest, as my Reverend friend has observed, evil should betide.”

“And I, too,” spoke Lily, as, with the dignity of a queen, she uprose from her position, “and I too, Lilian Lade, the child of your own daughter and my dear uncle’s brother; I, too, happy in my obscurity, to be

rendered still more happy to-morrow, in the protection of a husband I shall be proud to own, do also bid you depart. As one whom Heaven has punished, I may not add my reproaches to those of your own conscience ; as one allied to me, though only far apart, in blood, I will not use the language of upbraiding, but, once for all, depart, leave us all to our humble contentment ; as for myself, my home is here, where it has ever been—I would not have even you suffer humiliation in it. Your fine carriage is at the door, let it bear you hence, and for ever—I, the schoolmaster's destined wife, repudiate all claims to noble birth, or noble associations, and will keep the rank of life in which I have been reared."

Amazed, astounded, the old Earl first listened to one, then to the other, and lastly to his grandchild, in silent, stupefied wonder. His eyes, albeit sightless, turned from the direction of one sound, to that of another, as though their orbs were yet powerful to discern the speakers' motions, and it was to the full a minute after Lily had resumed her station, before the old man found words to express himself.

"You are my grandchild, and must obey my command. The law will help me if you refuse."

"Not now, that I am twenty-one years of age, *as was my poor mother, when she married,*" replied Lily.

This last sentence appeared to strike the Earl like the shot from a gun. He sat down, or rather, he collapsed into a small heap of humanity, utterly broken by this

chance shot, and became so pitiable in his extremity that both the gentlemen then present were compelled to tender him their assistance, and even Lily wept as she saw his humbled pride writhe and struggle with those pangs of remorse which seemed really to overpower him.

A glass of wine served at once to moisten his lips and to bring forth a few words to the effect that he wished to speak with his servants.

The servants instantly obeyed call, and received some whispered commands, which sent them quickly towards the carriage, still waiting at the outside gate. In a few moments they returned, bearing with them two boxes.

Meanwhile, a lamp was called for, and brought in, throwing its bright light upon the old nobleman's withered form, now greatly excited by a multiplicity of feelings, over which it appeared that some one, possibly that of hope, predominated.

At a few words from their master, the men unpacked both boxes, notwithstanding some opposition on the part of Walter Harewood.

From the boxes they took forth a magnificent dress of superb silken taffeta, made in the height of fashion, and trimmed as richly as the art of the sempstress and embroiderer could devise. Another dress followed, equally grand—and from a smaller box the leading menial displayed, in all the magnificence of a gold and morocco jewel case, a set of diamonds, pearls, and rubies, such as would have made a duchess envious. All

these things, with others equally attractive, did the smirking lackeys display upon table, chair, and couch, as though the sight of them ought to bring every beholder into an attitude of worship.

Side by side with the plain white muslin dress, arranged for the morrow's wedding, did those dazzling jewels and those costly satins shine, but their brightness called forth no respondent admiration from the eyes either of Lily Lade, or her two protectors, who all looked on in wondering silence.

"All these," said the Earl of Knuckledown, "and ten thousand times more, will I give my long lost grandchild, if she will but come and be the solace of my old age."

"Too late, too late," replied the Rev. gentleman. "I know my niece sufficiently well to answer for her; a few years back and the door of reconciliation was not entirely closed—it is now shut for ever. Christian minister that I am, and loving, as I do love, the sacredness of mercy and forgiveness, the whole tenor of your conduct towards my niece and her parents has been such that no reflecting person could look upon your future guardianship in the light of a desirable change for a young lady, whose future career is already marked out in accordance with her education and with the sanction of her own heart. The law gives you no claim over her person; you have severed all natural links, and will but expose yourself to universal obloquy by attempting to defend yourself. Go, therefore, in amity if you please, and in all Christian

forgiveness for the past ; but let those whom humility and contentment have made far happier than rank and station could effect, follow their own path likewise." Turning towards Lily and her betrothed, the Rev. gentleman once more spoke : " Retire, my children. As host and master here I will do the honours of my domicile alone."

With a somewhat ceremonious obeisance, Lily Lade took the arm of her lover, and with a look of pity for the old nobleman whose utter prostration was evident, she left the room in company with her future husband.

The Earl of Knuckledown, stupefied into passive obedience, beckoned to his servants, who immediately upraised him by either arm, and all but carried him out of the house and into his carriage, when the Rev. James Lade, following in his Lordship's wake, obtained from one of the outriders the knowledge that his lordship had already bespoke apartments at the Bush Inn, Farnham. Satisfied on this point, the Rev. gentleman directed others of his Lordship's retinue to replace the dresses and jewels in their respective boxes, and himself saw them consigned to their original resting-place, in one of those receptacles belonging to the carriage ; after which the equipage itself was driven away at a slow pace, and the repose of the Parsonage House was left unbroken for the rest of that eventful night.

CHAPTER VIII., AND LAST.

ON the following morning, so early as ten o'clock, there was great commotion in the little straggling village of Aldershot, for it was known through all the country round that pretty Lily Lade, the rustic belle of the parish, was about to be married to the chosen of her heart, Walter Harewood, whose character was equally respected with that of his bride. White robed children were there, bearing baskets of flowers with which to strew the short pathway between the Parsonage House and the church, where it was understood that the ceremony of marriage would be conducted by a neighbouring clergyman, the Rev. James Lade himself officiating as father to the lady.

Shortly after the hour had struck, Lily and her two bridesmaids, each robed in virgin white, and bearing no other ornaments than befitted the modest quality of the bride herself, issued from the Parsonage House and entered the sacred edifice, where awaited the bridegroom and his chosen friends, decorously tricked out for the occasion. Every pew of the old church had its occupants, and a fair assemblage of honest, hearty, country faces, being those of more privileged friends, ranged around the immediate precincts of the altar.

Few, but very few of the assembled witnesses bore the stamp of rank ; perhaps it might even be said that none there assembled were of station beyond that of well-to-do

farmers, their wives and families—for in those days, though little more than one hundred years before our era, the clergy did not take rank with the gentry of the land as a matter of right, but only when they happened to be possessed of revenues which placed them on a monied level with their patrons. But upon the faces of all there assembled there sat a look of approving gladness, such as well compensated for the absence of a more refined presence.

At a quarter before eleven, precisely, the marriage ceremony began, but scarcely was the first sentence delivered by the officiating clergyman, when a slight commotion at the door caused the turning of all heads, excepting those of the bride and bridegroom, who, with faces concealed in the cushion of the altar rails, seemed absorbed in their own feelings. Whilst the ceremony proceeded, there appeared, supported by two servants, the Earl of Knuckledown, who with his white head and tottering form, made his way slowly down the centre aisle, placid as a child, and to all appearance totally bereft of his former manner and bearing. By the time the happy pair were made one, and their fortunes united for better or worse; for richer or poorer, till God should part them for ever, the old nobleman had reached the altar group, and became as one of the other spectators, offering no interruption, nor in any other way deviating from the strict line of propriety. All that was observed of him was that in his hand he bore an ominous looking

folded roll of parchment, tied round with lawyer-like red tape, and having one large official looking seal after the manner of important legal documents.

The ceremony ended, and those immediately concerned took their way towards the vestry room for the purpose of signing the certificate in all due form.

It is uncertain whether or not the bride and bridegroom observed the presence of the aged nobleman; but whether or not, it is certain that the Earl followed the party into the vestry, where, after the usual signatures had been affixed, he walked boldly to the table and claimed to add his name to those of the other witnesses, a request which none thought fit to oppose.

With wonder in their looks, and some slight misgivings, did the newly-united pair, and their reverend guardian, observe the old man affix his name to those of his predecessors; but all cause of apprehension was happily dead. His Lordship, by one of those singularly late touches of remorse, had buried all animosities in the grave of the past, and had no sooner completed his task, than he placed in the hands of Walter Harewood that legal looking parchment which had excited so strange a feeling of curiosity. Brief were the words of the old nobleman, but sufficinet to render still more complete the happiness of all. For he bade the bridegroom and his bride "good speed," commending them to each other, and asking to be remembered in their prayers as one repentant and forgiven. With this, he

turned away, slowly, sorrowfully assisted by his servants into his carriage, which presently drove away, and was no more seen in the neighbourhood of Aldershot.

When the Rev. James Lade, as the one most in authority, opened the parchment scroll, it was found to be a deed-gift of TEN THOUSAND POUNDS, and although at first sight repudiated, was, after some brief argument, accepted as a peace offering, such as Christian feeling and prudential wisdom could not reject.

Thus ends the tradition of Lily Lade.

POEMS, ETC.

THE LAY OF THE LOST ENSIGN.

I.

YOUNG ENSIGN "DOBBS" got up one day,
At Aldershot Camp, in a very poor way,
He'd joined but one month, it is proper to say,
And had got his mess expenses to pay,
Besides an account with Mr. GRAY,
For "billiards"—at which he could not play!

With sundry odd matters to tailors and hatters,
His laundress—his servant—with others *en suite*,
Not forgetting his "Artist" for *cartes-de-visite*;
In short he'd a dozen long bills to pay,
Amounting perhaps to——what shall we say?
Some fifty pounds won't be out of the way;
And all with five-shillings-and-sixpence-a-day!
He jump'd out of bed, with a pain in his head,
And thus to his servant bemusingly said;

“Come tell me my man—and tell me true,
 What can an Officer hope to do,
 When he’s been so rash, as to spend all his cash
 When his creditors threaten to settle his hash,
 And his credit’s all gone to immortal smash!”

II.

Now Private SMALL, whom he chose to call
 His *valet de place*, was a man so tall,
 He could leap with ease o’er a six-foot wall,
 And therefore because of his extra size,
 Believed himself to be extra wise :
 So he answered, “Were I in a fix like you,
 I know exactly what I should do ;
 I’d borrow some cash of that excellent Jew
 Who lends it without any other secu-
 Rity than an Officer’s I O U,
 And who lives in M * * * x street, Number 2.”

III.

“Go call me a cab,” quoth Dobbs, with a sigh ;
 “I don’t like these things, but suppose I must try ;
 I’ll haste to London by quickest express,
 And return in good time to prepare me for mess.”
 So saying, he went. * * *

Behold him there,
 He reaches a house near Hanover Square,
 He knocks at the door, he mounts the stair,
 He enters a room, he takes a chair,

While a tallow-faced Jew with crinkley hair,
Politely requests him his wants to declare.

* * * *

“Vat vifty! no more? Pless your soul, my tear friend,
Vy it ain’t vorth de trouble to porrow or lend!
Say vun underd—or two—ve shall charge you de same,
De expenshe vosh no more—but vun trifle to name:
Yet stay! you vant courage! so pleas take som vine,
You’ll find it, pelieve me, unkommonly fine!
Here ish vite—here ish red,”—(here his shoulders he
shrugg’d)
“Ve imports it ourselves, and ve vorrints it” (drugg’d!).

IV.

Behold poor DOBBS—he swallows some wine
Which he does *not* think “uncommonly fine,”
But drinks notwithstanding, in hope to progress
With his mission in time to return to mess;
He drinks and grows poorly—he drinks and grows
worse,
Still hoping in haste to replenish his purse
He drinks and grows stupid—he takes pen in hand
And signs a small paper at SMOUCHY’S command;
He pockets *one* note (tis for fifty,—no more—
Though his I O U stands for exactly five-score),
He gets to his cab, which still waits at the door,
And starts for the railway exactly at four,

He reaches the Station—He reaches the Camp,
 Unconscious of having been “done” by a scamp,
 Till, next day,—to his grief and his horror he found,
 He was charged for bad wine—bad cigars—£30 !

V.

Three months glide by quickly, when sure as the day,
 There comes a slim bill, with “I promise to pay ;”
 Which promise poor DOBBS is unable to keep,
 For reasons which rob him of many nights’ sleep ;
 “Vot harm,” quoth the Jew, “ve can easy renew,
 De expenshe vos ten poun’, to vich ve add two,
 For de trouble of callin’ ven next it is due.”

VI.

Three months pass on,—and three to that,
 The slim little bill begins to wax fat :
 Six months—then twelve—the bill grows fatter—
 Two hundred pounds ! but then “What matter ?”
 The Jew so polite is, it seems that he quite is
 A man to whom doing good acts a delight is—
 Till one sad day, when he comes to say,
 Poor DOBBS must perform his “Promise to pay,”
 Without the slightest demur or stay,
 In short before he will go away,
 Or - - - - -

* * * *

Concerning what next poor DOBBS befel,
The muse is extremely reluctant to tell;
But the matter must out—so thus it fell:
He had not the cash, and the thought was so sad,
It drove him quite frantic, in short, raving mad:
He did such queer things that his visitor swore
That “by Moses” and “Aaron” he’d “stand it” no
more:

He pull’d out his beautiful hair by the roots;
He emptied the water-jug into his boots;
He rush’d to a shelf—whence a bottle he took—
Turned full on the Usurer one horrid look
Then—ere one could guess his terrific design—
He had POISONED himself! — WITH THE JEW’S OWN
PORT-WINE!!!

THE "CARTE-DE-VISITE:" A ROMANCE OF ALDERSHOT.

YOUNG Neddy Fitzmaul, of the Aldershot Blues,
Stood four-feet-six in his birthday shoes ;
He readily would—have much rather stood,
Some five-feet-ten if he possibly could.
But the fates were against it, so Neddy was fain,
At four feet six to sigh and remain,
Though not without striving to lessen his pain
By sundry manœuvres all equally vain.
Brandy he took—beat up with raw eggs,
In hopes that his stature might swell ;
But it nourished his nose instead of his legs,
And made him extremely unwell.
A hat he bought very tall in the crown,
Adding nearly one foot to his height—
But the little boys came and flattened it down,
A measure by no means polite.
A pair of new boots he then sought to get made,
By an artiste well known in the boot-making trade,
With soles very thick and with heels very high,
Which raised him some three inches nearer the sky.
But the "dodge" scarce succeeded,
So well as was needed ;

His walk being very much thereby impeded :
In short 'twas no "walk" so to call, but a "toddle,"
Which ended one morning in cracking his noddle.
Despairing at last, he grew sick of his life,

And determined on ending its trouble,
When somebody whispered, "Go get you a wife ;
A single man's portion is sorrow and strife ;

You'll be thought of much more when you're *double*."
Now this, to tell truth of young Neddy Fitzmaul,
Was a notion he long had debated,
But how to succeed was the question of all,
Which to solve was a trouble in no measure small.
Yet solve it he did in a way one may call
Ingenuous, if strictly not o-ri-gi-nal,

As briefly below shall be stated.

"I'll put an advertisement in," quoth our Ned,

"There are papers in plenty—diurnal,
With weeklies as well—all extensively read,

Such as Cassell's, the Herald, and Journal.

I'll top my advertisement, 'WANTED A WIFE,'

And answers will follow, I'll wager my life !"

He did it, and answers came surely, galore,

From "Jessie" and "Bessie" and ninety-nine more,

But strangely enough each objected to treat,

Till he sent, for her album, his "carte-de-visite."

So poor Neddy was fain, while his innocent brain,

With joy was nigh turned topsy-turvy,

Go stand for his "*carte*" with a love-yearning heart,

To that famous photographer "HERVE."
Now, please let me whisper a secret—'tis this,
When a well-bred photographer sees aught amiss,
He can modify, somewhat—the short can make tall;
The little make large—the large can make small,
By a slight piece of "dodgery" not known to all,
Yet clearly within his legitimate call,
And thus did it happen with Neddy Fitzmaul.
For the cunning photographer—bidding him stand
As gracefully as he was able,
Placed closely, but gingerly, at his right hand,
A *child's* parlour chair and low table.
The contrast served well—his portrait, when done,
Was correct, as no one can deny;
And yet for all that the best part of the fun,
Was, it made him look six feet high.
Away with twelve copies (ten shillings they cost),
He rush'd in a phrenzied delight,
Despatching them off by that evening's post,
To the twelve correspondents who pleased him the most,
Then went to his bed for the night.

One day elapsed—one tedious day—when lo! the post-
man's knock!
Twelve letters for Fitzmaul was cried, producing quite a
shock;
Young Neddy opened them—Oh, bliss! to find his love
requited

By just eleven out of twelve (that twelfth he straightway
slighted) ;

Each one of the eleven made a separate assignation
To meet him by the self-same hour at Tongham railway
station.

He went, they came, they saw enough—those pretty
damsels all ;

But not one single girl of them would marry one so
small !

Each took a ticket by return and whirl'd to town away,
Leaving poor Fitz. to grieve and mourn his wretched
luck that day.

The train swept on,—Fitzmaul had turned to seek his
lonely home,

From which he vowed he never more would wander forth
to roam,

When to his side a fairy form of dazzling beauty crept,
Whose faultless features, blushing, alternate smil'd or
wept—

“ You sent me this,” she slyly said, discovering his “carte,”
Then fondly placed it back again, to rest upon her heart—
“ I read your declaration, but replied not to its call,
For fear—to tell the downright truth—for fear you
were *too tall*—

I wish'd to look before I leapt.”

“ Sweet angel !” Neddy cried,

“ You're much the prettiest girl I've met—say, will you
be my bride ? ”

Of course she blush'd, of course she bent her lovely eye-
lids down,

Then whisper'd "yes" becomingly, without the slightest
frown.

So Neddy Fitzmaul of the "Aldershot blues,"
When he walk'd from the Tongham station,
Stood five-feet-ten—if not in his shoes—

At least in his own estimation.

No happier couple e'er travelled through life,
Or found this world's pleasure more sweet,
Than Neddy Fitzmaul and his beautiful wife,—
And all through a *carte-de-visite*.

THE BELL OF SEVASTOPOL.*

WHAT sound is that which zephyr brings
From yonder low-browed hill?
That sweeps along on fluttering wings,
Or tinkles like a rill!
Now "booming" on the startled ear
With note of thrilling tone:
Now like an echo sweet and clear,
That murmurs and is gone!
It is the bell—the Russian bell—the bell whose iron
tongue,
Hath tolled full many a hero's knell—hath many a re-
quiem sung;
Whose voice hath mingled with the breeze that swept the
Black Sea wave,
From Azoff to Sevastopol o'er many a true man's grave.
The bell that once, in joyous strain,
From pinnacle or tower,
Proclaimed a Czar's imperial reign,
A tyrant's boastful power.
The bell that never more shall ring
Where listening serfs abide,

* For the information of those who do not live in or near Aldershot, be it noted that the bell upon which, are struck the hours of day and night in the Camp, was brought from Sevastopol, and is supposed to have been one belonging to a convent.

Or crouching helots shivering sing
The hymn of Tartar pride ;
For England's blood hath ransomed now,
And British valour won,
That trophy from a barbarous foe,
Whose power it trampled on ;
Whose flag it trailed along the mire,
Through seas of blood, through flames of fire,
Where tears and groans, commingling, sent
Their incense to Heaven's firmament,
In witness of the boastful deed
Which caused all honest hearts to bleed,
That monarchs in their pride of will
Should make a sport of human ill ;
And proud ambition vault so high,
That—failing Heaven—it falls to die.
That bell !—its voice all silent now to speak of pomp or
power,
Time's messenger alone behold !—to note each passing
hour,
Meet office for a captured slave, to warn of life's decay,
How pride may fall—how pomp may fade—how power
may pass away !
It hath a cadence in its chime,
Like some funereal knell ;
That loud-tongued messenger of time,
That solemn Russian bell.

Perchance it was this self same bell whose deep and
sonorous boom,
Aroused the men of Inkermann through morning's misty
gloom,*
That warned the sentinel's quick ear, and bade him mark
its note,
As stealthily the foe came down Tchernaya's winding
route,
Which ushered in that awful day
Of weary strife and bloody fray,
When Newman, Greville, Townsend fell
Like men who did their duty well.
When Strangways, Cathcart, rashly brave,
Each sought and found a soldier's grave.
When Barker, Butler, Goldie, Wynn,
In honour's brotherhood akin,
Died nobly for their country's cause
And won in death the world's applause !
That bell ! that bell ! whose iron tongue
So many a dirge hath fitly sung,
Oh ! could it but in language speak
The tale of days gone by,
How many a bursting heart might break,
How many a bosom sigh,

* Soon after midnight in the dark hours which preceded the battle of Inkermann, the booming sound of one single bell was heard by the outposts of the Allied Army, and caused some speculation as to what it meant.

O'er friends and loved ones left to bleed, untended where
 they fell,
 Who else had lived to hear again that solemn Russian bell.

Away with grief ! Let sterner passions rise,
 Behold ! earth's lightning flashing through the skies,
 Whilst mimic thunder—deadly as Heaven's own—
 Pours forth in volleys from the Mamelon.
 Redan, and Malakoff, with deadly aim
 Send iron messengers from mouths of flame.
 The sea, too, hurls its vengeance 'gainst the shore,
 Whose bulwarks frown its ruffled bosom o'er,
 Earth, air, and water trembling with the roar. }
 Britannia's sons with Gallia leagued in one,
 Sardinia and the Turk—led bravely on ;
 United press their legions on the foe,
 Resolved to strike one overwhelming blow.
 Sevastopol ! that maiden of the sea
 (Her white robe stained with blood of liberty)
 Stands forth the mark ! by justice doomed to fall
 Unmourned, unpitied, unbeloved by all !
 What need of poet's feeble strain to tell how England
 fought !
 How brave Sardinia's green-clad sons the van of danger
 sought !
 How Gallia's host dashed ruthlessly, nor deigned its
 head to quail
 Beneath a storm of hissing shot—of pelting iron hail !

How, turned aside, yet conquered not, each dared again
the foe,

Nor owned repulse, nor feared reproach, but answered
blow with blow.

Till death-crowned valour awed itself, whilst Heaven
looked weeping o'er,

And pride's endurance sought a lull for strength to strike
once more.

What call for poet's humble lay to speak the crowning
deed?

How foiled ambition stayed its flight, and curbed its
erring speed !

How Menschikoff, the parasite, bent low his supple
knee,*

How Nicholas, the bold and bad, succumbed to fate's
decree.

How martyred Raglan fought and died, nor less on
glory's bed

That fever racked his manly form and bowed his noble
head !

That tale is writ on history's page by Time's almighty
pen,

Unblotted by one tear of shame before the eyes of men.

* Menschikoff was officially reported to have died of fever, but Russian fevers are proverbially difficult to understand. Very many of the Russian peasantry believe, even to the present day, that Menschikoff is not dead at all, but has hidden his sins within the walls of a monastery.—Vide Wood's 'History of the Crimean War.'

The "flaunting flag" of victory, the drum's triumphant roll,
Proclaim how justice did its work on dead Sevastopol!
Such whispered chronicles as these
Of man's unbridled will,
Methinks come travelling on the breeze
From yonder low-crowned hill,
Where caged and guarded, like a bird, the captured tell-tale swings,
Now yielding music to the ear, now flapping loud its wings.
That bell ! that solitary bell !
Must bitter tidings ever tell :
No marriage rite may claim its voice,
No joy-note be its happy choice,
No peal of welcome ever ring the listener's hope to cheer,
But one dull round of duty fill with each succeeding year.*

How sorrowful, how sad a fate,
Was ever bell thus desolate !
Nor wonder they who note its sound
On hill, or dale, or marshy ground.

* We believe that the bell is never struck but for the purpose of noting the lapse of time ; certainly it is never rung upon any joyful occasion, nor even for the hour of prayer. Its vocation is solely that of an hour-bell.

It hath a cadence in its chime,
Like some funereal knell ;
That loud-tongued messenger of time—
That solemn Russian bell !

THOUGHTS

*Suggested by the Visit of a Russian Potentate to
Aldershot Camp, November 2nd, 1864.*

Why sounds the clarion? and why beats the drum?

 This peaceful morn,

 Of wintry dawn,

Hath tidings of some mighty victory come?

That martial ardour lights each soldier's eye,

 And pride of country fills

 Each heart that thrills

Beneath the MEDAL of CRIMEA's die!

No fight victorious doth these sounds denote,

 But yet a triumph still

 Of might and will,

Dear to the stalwart men of Aldershot.

For ONE there comes—a MAN of mighty name—

 Those serried ranks to meet,

 To honour, and to greet,

To hail—as kindred spirits dear to fame:

Whose glance will scan them with a soldier's eye

 That hath seen battles, and whose breath of praise

Will be more worth, to men of chivalry,

 Than thrice the shout which panderers can raise.

Behold him here ! That chief of northern clime,
See how he reins his charger o'er the plain ;
His keen eye hath a light well nigh sublime,
Which, like his sword blade, never falls in vain.

His glance *surveys*—it marks each several man,
Takes note of all that claims a soldier's meed ;
The head erect, the chest of ample span,
The martial bearing (pledge of strength and speed) ;
The dauntless brow, with freedom's stamp of pride
That quails not 'neath the aspect of command,
Which—save in Britain's sons—the world beside
Can show not, in the breadth of all its land.

Tall and erect, in simple habit clad,
With martial cloak alone
O'er his broad shoulders thrown,
He looks around him—haply with a sad
But solemn eye—
Wherefore ! and why ?

Because (*and let no false, ideal shame
Obscure the light of an illustrious name*)—

Those SELF SAME MEN, and HE, had met before *
As foes—not friends—on a far distant shore,

* As a matter of course this expression must be taken in a figurative sense. It is not quite certain that the famous Russian engineer was actually IN Sevastopol at the time of its evacuation, although there is a strong suspicion of his having been there very shortly before.

HIS force 'gainst THEIRS had matched—but matched in
vain,

HIS skill had met a skill of DEEPER strain.

Those VETERAN RANKS, whose manly breasts display

The badge of conquest, valour's proudest dole,

Are those he met—one ne'er forgotten day

When Britain's flag waved o'er SEVASTOPOL!

'Tis done, and past. Let time his votaries send,

Man's vanquished foe should ever be his friend.

Be welcome all to fair Britannia's isle

Who come, unarmed, to meet her willing smile.

England is rich in fame—with wealth to spare,

Nor grudgingly bestows on honoured men;

Proud in herself—her pride she deigns to share,

And thus a WREATH awards to TODLEBEN.

LINES ON THE DEATH OF JANE CÆSAR.

January 22nd, 1865.

“HER end was peace.” She tarried not
Through all life’s sorrowing day,
Nor turned from out her onward path
To wander by the way.
She bore her cross without one sigh,
Nor shed one useless tear ;
But calmly smiled amidst her pain,
In hopes that Heaven was near.

A Christian pure, a loving child,
A friend to all who knew !
What sorrow may bespeak the worth
Of one so good and true ?
What vain regret shall mourn her loss
In parent, kindred, friend,
Whose love is with her Saviour now
’Midst joys that ne’er may end.

’Twere surely best for soul like hers
To climb the starry sky,
Without one taint of earthly sin
To blot its purity ;

Than in this world to tarry long
Amidst temptation's wiles,
And barter Heaven's eternal love
For earth's deceitful smiles.

Be therefore hushed the struggling moan
Which from your breasts would rise,
And check within its crystal home
The fountain of your eyes.
Be sure God's wisdom falters not
In claiming for his rest,
But ever chooses for himself
The purest and the best.

"Her end was peace"—let yours be so,
And when that end shall come,
How great your joy to find a place
In that eternal home;
Where child and parent meet again,
And meet to part no more :
Partakers of a Saviour's joy,
And Heaven's all-bounteous store.

MONODY

On the death of Catherine Anne White, September 4, 1864.

IN virgin beauty, like a star,
Her light hath passed away,
No more the pilgrim-path of life
To gladden with its ray ;
No more some watcher's heart to thrill
That worshipped by its gleam,
As, silently and sinlessly,
It shone with placid beam.
Upon the threshold of life's joys
She stood—yet entered not ;
Her dreams of youth all unfulfilled,
Her half-born hopes forgot,
The sweets of life untasted, all
Save those of youth's brief hour.
(The rose bud's joy, which hopes, ere long,
To bloom a glorious flower.)
Her well-loved home is desolate,
Her kindred weep in vain,
Her place is vacant by their hearth,
Nor may be filled again ;
And yet she is not dead to all,
For they, so pure, who die
Have living virtues, which embalm
Their fadeless memory ;

Which, like some sweet perfume distilled,
Yet speak of beauty gone,
Of crumbling leaves *now turned to dust*,
That once a flow'ret shone.
"She is not dead, but sleepeth," thus
Doth holy wisdom tell ;
Her trust was in her Saviour's love,
And lo ! she sleepeth WELL !

The star of her young life hath set
To every mortal eye,
Yet shines with ten-fold loveliness
In some far distant sky,
Where light is quenchless as Heav'n's love,
Immortal as Heav'n's throne,
A thing too bright for human eyes,
Or human hearts to own.

Be ours to think on, from afar,
The glories of that home,
Where every soul may shine a star,
'Neath God's celestial dome.
Be ours, with inward peace, to look
On death's o'ershadowing day,
To bless the hand which giveth all,
Which taketh all away.

THE LADIES.

God bless their pretty little hearts—I love to see them
smile,

They look so *very* innocent, so *very* free from guile ;
I love to see them pout—and toss their head, as some
can do,

It sets off rosy lips so well, and glistening ringlets too ;
I love to hear them scold—a bit—but not too loud or long,
It proves their lungs are really good, and shows a taste
for song ;

I almost love to see them weep—it makes their eyes so
bright

With diamond-dropping sympathy, or tender pity's light.

I love to hear them whisper “Yes” in fitting time and
place ;

I love to hear them answer “No,” if spoken with a grace ;
I love to see them “walking out” in fashion's fullest
pride,

I love to see them robed in white—as may befit a bride ;
But most of all I love to see them clothed in modest form,
The pride of some domestic hearth, where love is pure
and warm,

'Tis there—AT HOME—they brightest shine, in queen-like
state—alone ;

Their children's love—a diadem ; their husband's heart
—a throne.

THE MISER—A SATIRE.

After (and a very long way after) Juvenal.

“Quærenda pecunia primum est
Virtus post nummos.” HORACE.

“Avant tout, l'argent, et après
L'argent tout——” PIRON.

“Save a thief from the gallows
And he will—bury you decently.”
(Old English proverb, slightly improved.)

WHERE London's countless steeples proudly rise,
Like angel fingers, pointing to the skies ;
Where Commerce sits upon her bales enthroned,
A goodlier monarch than the world e'er owned ;
Where pomp, and power, and wisdom, wit, and pride,
With crime and poverty, stand side by side ;
Where ignorance, with husky voice, aloud
Proclaims his folly to the gaping crowd,
A miser once—a man of strange renown—
Abided, 'midst the jeers of half the town,
Hoarding his wealth in piles of bond and deed,
The fruits of usury at blackest need ;
Holding within his grip of iron hate
The lands of many a lord that ruled the state.

His garb was of the meanest man could wear,
His food was of the scantiest man could bear,

His wants were of the fewest Heaven could yield,
 And even such he stinted or concealed,
 Till nigh he went that problem strange to prove
 Of "how a man may live on hate or love,"
 Dining on "naught," within his own house-door,
 Then giving *all that's left* to feed the poor.
 Aged was he, and wrinkled at the brow,
 With hair as white as is the driven snow,
 And eyes of fire, which, sparkling as they shone,
 Forbade the thought that intellect had flown,
 As many found, who, to their sorrowing cost
 Had sought to prove which could o'erreach the most;
 Nor kith nor kin he owned, no friend he knew
 Save one—A THIEF!—from justice snatched, and who, }
 Though false to all the world, to HIM was true.

Strange men strange fancies have; some have been shown
 To love another's child, and hate their own,
 Of such was he, that miser, stern and cold
 To all the world from whom he held his gold,
 But to that thief he bore a father's love,
 Was careful, tender, gentle as a dove,
 He fed him, feasted him, and clothed him well,
 Press'd money on his palm, as gossips tell,
 Bade him be merry whilst it held in store,
 And when 'twere gone, to hasten back for more.

The gaping world wherein he chanced to dwell,
 Look'd on in wonder more than tongue can tell,
 It wonder'd why the thief no longer stole—
That thief was now past poverty's control;
 It wonder'd that the miser still lived on—
That thief was there to guard him like a son;

It wonder'd that the old man, day by day,
Grew better clad and kindlier in his way,
It guess'd not that the thief his will had spared,
By grateful love his better thoughts ensnared,
Till, one by one, each vice of miser kind
Departed from the old man's brightening mind ;
His *friend* and he grew generous of their store,
Feasted the rich, nor yet denied the poor,
Lived in esteem with all, in wealth and pride,
Till one sad day, wherein—the old man died !

They buried him in all the pomp of state,
With countless mourners to bewail his fate,
They came in shoals to hear the miser's will,
And bade the very whispering winds be still.
But horror sat on each expectant face
When lo !—'twas told he left no single trace
Of wealth behind him, scarce enough, though : all,
To pay th' expenses of his funeral !

The thief went back to his first trade again,
A wiser thief—but in a sadder strain.
He stole, and stole, and hoarded all he stole,
Grudging his own poor wants, a poorer dole,
'Till—counting up the wealth his theft had brought
He found it well sufficient for his thought :
He raised a MARBLE TOMB—now, mark the end,
In memory of his one and only friend,
Then, with his relic of ill-gotten pelf,
Bought two poor yards of rope, and hang'd himself.



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 014 457 382 1

